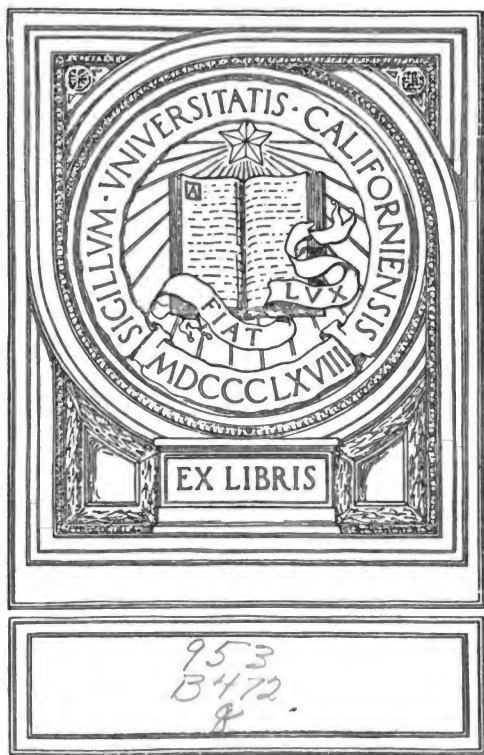


**QUEEN  
ELEANOR'S  
VENGEANCE  
AND OTHER  
POEMS**

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William Cox Bennett







See Page 17.

QUEEN ELEANOR'S  
VENGEANCE.

AND

Other Poems.

THE  
MUSE OF  
VENGEANCE.

BY

W. C. BENNETT.

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TO

MY WIFE

I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME.

M 9389

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# POEMS.



## QUEEN ELEANOR'S VENGEANCE.

QUEEN ELEANOR'S is a deadly hate;  
It dogs her foes down keen as fate.

And woe to those who the dark Queen scorn,  
Better far had they never been born !

Than the Poitevin Queen should have on them frown'd,  
They'd have better been tracked by a black sleuth-  
hound.

Be they ever so high who court her frown,  
Her Aquitain hate will pull them down.

Be they ever so fair her love who cross,  
Let them 'ware of deadly peril and loss.

Let them praise their name-saints, if, in the strife,  
They lose all else, and yet 'scape with life.

Woe and woe to Lord Clifford's daughter !  
Eleanor's fiercest hate has sought her.

Sought her fiercely, and sought her long,  
On the false king's leman to wreak her wrong.

A wrong not she will tamely endure,  
That the Clifford's blood alone can cure ;

For she of Poitou will wreak on her worse  
Than empty scold and womanish curse.

And the parching thirst of the South Queen's rage,  
The bowl or the steel shall alone assuage.

The draught from the bowl, or the stab from the steel,  
That her own right hand shall give or shall deal ;



The bowl fierce thrust on the trembling hand  
Of the white fair thing that can hardly stand;

The stab that's dealt through the horror flung  
To her feet, while her curse in its ears is rung;

These alone shall assuage her hate;  
One shall be his Rosamond's fate.

Well had the King his treasure conceal'd;  
Long was she sought through wood and through field.

Long was she sought through road and through way,  
Ere that she fell the dark Queen's prey.

For gold — what cannot be bought with gold?  
To the South Queen's ears the secret's told.

Death laughs out in her bitter laugh;  
Vengeance shall not be glutted but half.

Now to her robe let his minion cling !  
Not her's the grasp of the doting King.

Now let a voice hiss into her ear,  
Not his honied words, but the frenzy of fear !

Now let curses stay her breath  
With the anguish of sudden and certain death !

Ho ! ho ! then, Woodstock holds the eyes  
'That 'witch a king of his smiles and sighs !

A laggard is hate, if flits an hour  
Ere Eleanor seeks the Clifford's bower ;

For, warring in Aquitaine, far away  
Is he to her hate who had barr'd the way.

And God her soul from His good grace spurn,  
If the Clifford have life when the King return.

Gold the clue from her guard has charm'd;  
Gold has the minion's guard unarm'd.

O but the dark Queen's face was fix'd  
To the look of hell as the draught she mix'd !

And O but hell to her fierce eyes rose,  
As from many a dagger the keenest she chose !

Woe, O woe, for the golden-hair'd,  
For whom her King has so softly cared !

Woe, O woe, for the blue soft eyes  
That, woe for them ! won a kingly prize !

O woe for the cheek and the lip so red,  
That shall whiten so soon to the hue of the dead !

And woe, thrice woe, for the rounded form  
That soon not a kiss of its King shall warm !

And woe, thrice woe, for the rose-sweet breath  
So soon to be still'd for ever by death !

The Queen has left her secret room,  
And horses are led out by page and groom ;

In the saddle, her men-at-arms, fierce and still,  
Sit ready to do her dark fierce will.

Woe, O woe, to green Woodstock's rose,  
If grasp'd by such rude wild hands as those !

Iron hands, and hearts that, in sooth,  
As little know as their poignards of ruth ;

Men of Poitou and of Aquitain race,  
Keen to read their Southern Queen's face ;

Men that on Henry's self had trod  
At a flash of her eye or a meaning nod ;

Bloodhounds fell, that she holds in the slip,  
Loosed by her frown or the curl of her lip.

Eleanor mounts; and away and away  
They ride through the gloom of the darkening day.

The day is lost in a gusty night,  
Such tempest as suits her purpose aright.

And homestead and village, as by they sweep,  
Feel a shudder of horror thrill through their sleep.

Hours have come and hours have gone,  
But still that terrible hate rides on.

Hours have come and hours have past,  
Hush'd Woodstock's streets are reach'd at last.

Cool and fresh is the midnight breeze  
That stirs green Woodstock's sleeping trees.

Yet little the raging Queen recks now,  
That the misty midnight cools her brow;

She hears not, she, the town's quick stir,  
The casements open'd to gaze on her.

Death — her thought is of death alone,  
Of a white dead face and a last deep groan.

No — not to save broad England's crown,  
Would she miss the joy with which she leaps down.

Adown she lights; Lord Christ ! may few  
Of earth feel the hate that thrills her through !

O but it gladdens the heart of hell  
To feel the fire of a rage so fell !

It nears to one, and before the hour,  
The grim Queen's at the Clifford's bower.



O, ere the morning has grown to two,  
That hand has a fearful deed to do !

And, ere the morning has pass'd to three,  
Those eyes have a ghastly sight to see.

O fearfulest deed ! and O ghastliest sight !  
That best had been hidden in dreariest night !

The guards the door of the bower undo ;  
In her hand is the end of the maze's clue ;

With fast-set teeth and a tiger tread,  
Swift and softly she tracks the thread.

A dread flits with her across the grass,  
And the laurels shiver to feel her pass.

The heart of the maze her stern feet reach,  
And a low laugh 's laugh'd that is more than speech.

Dim before her rises the tower  
That holds the sweetness of Woodstock's flower.

Rose, how soon, with a pitiless scorn,  
From its sweet young hold upon life to be torn !

Rosamond stirs in her slumber deep;  
What is the terror that shakes her sleep ?

Rosamond starts from her ghastly dreams;  
What is the sound that to hear she seems ?

Is it the dreamt-of terror that's there?  
Is it a foot on the creaking stair?

Hark ! she stiffens up white in bed;  
Whom will it bring—that mounting tread?

Well may the blood to her cold heart start!  
Who is it tears her curtains apart?

She tries to shriek, but her tongue is dumb;  
Woe ! woe ! the meeting so fear'd has come !

“ Mercy ! ” she reads that gaze aright,  
Of the whelpless wolf or the hunger'd kite.

“ Mercy ! ” Christ ! in that fierce, quick breath,  
Is panted the horror of sure, sharp death !

Out she flings her upon the floor,  
As the grim Queen closes the chamber's door.

Heap'd on the trembling floor she lies,  
White as the dead 'neath those dreadful eyes.

Eyes that are fill'd with the fire of hell,  
As shiver and shudder her prey's throes tell.

As over her prey she stands and looks down,  
On her who must play with a queen for a crown.

But the game is play'd, and lost is the stake,  
And the winner is here the forfeit to take.

Heaven and hell have heard her vow;  
Heaven and hell know its fell truth now.

What! and is this the head that would rest  
Its golden curls upon Henry's breast!

What! are these the fingers, slight as a girl's,  
The fingers that wound them in Henry's curls!

What! these are the white, round arms, that could find  
No form but a king's round which to wind!

A king's! and darker, and yet more grim,  
Grows the fell Queen's look as she thinks of him.

A king's! and dread are the words that meet  
The aching ears at her ruthless feet.

Curse and scorn, that they quiver to hear,  
With a half-dead heart and a sickening fear.

Curses that blast, and withering scorn;  
Jesu ! O had she never been born !

Jesu ! O that the earth would break,  
And straight the quick to the dead would take !

“ Up, foul minion ! your foul joy 's past ;  
“ Hate, and not love, is here at last.

“ What ! you must toy with a crownèd king,  
“ With the hand that God saw set on this, this ring !

“ Up ! swore I not that we should meet ?  
“ Up ! ere I tread you beneath my feet.

“ Mercy ? No—not in life nor death ;  
“ The air is hell while it holds your breath.

" Mercy? Yes—for body and soul;

" Such mercy as lurks in this poignard and bowl.

" Well did you plot my mercy to earn!

" Rise! how, minion, your prayers I spurn!

" Thus I laugh at your vain despair;

" Rise, ere I tear you up by the hair.

" Rise, and shudder! I—Eleanor—I

" Hiss in your ears: Arise, and die!"

Up she rises, a ghastly sight;

O but her lips are cold and white!

O but white is her ghastly cheek!

And O but what horror her fix'd eyes speak!

Vacant of sense, her glassy stare

On the cup thrust out, and the keen knife bare.



Her stare, that seems not to understand  
What glares from each stony out-stretch'd hand;

Her stare, that sees all as if it seem'd,  
As if but a feverish dream it dream'd.

Yet real is the steel, and real the draught,  
The steel to be felt, or the death to be quaff'd.

Real the ghastly hush that she hears,  
And the ghastly "Choose!" that shrills through her ears.

Which shall she seize, and which refuse?  
For ever she hears that murderous "Choose!"

"Choose, ere my dagger loose you to tell  
"The tale of your cursed shame to hell!"

Not the stab from her hands! not a touch from them!  
Swift her fingers clutch on the gold cup's stem.

As if life were hateful, at once she drains  
The draught, till no fearful drop remains.

As if life were fled from, and death were sweet,  
She drinks, and lies at the fierce Queen's feet.

And sharp and shrill is her one wild cry,  
" O God, but to see my boys ere I die !

" O Henry !" and with that name her breath  
Flutters and stills to stirless death.

The deed is done — the deed of hell ;  
What the grim Queen feels, what tongue may tell !

As she looks a look at the staring clay,  
And wordless and frowning turns away.

Yet again she turns and stoops her down,  
And darker and feller yet grows her frown.

A fair long tress her dagger has shorn ;  
That tress her page to the King has borne.

“ A wifely gift to the Queen's Lord sent.”  
O but the grim King strode his tent !

With a wounded lion's growl and glare,  
As he ground his teeth o'er the pale tress there.

As through his set teeth there raged an oath,  
And he plighted again to the dead his troth.

And an oath of vengeance he fiercely swore,  
To the white cold one he should see no more.

Well for you is it, darksome Queen,  
The ocean rolls you and your Lord between !

Else small his mercy, and short the shrift  
Of her who her hand 'gainst the Clifford dared lift.

Yet better were that than your fearsome doom,  
That gives you, Queen, to a living tomb.

That gives your fierce life, day by day,  
In a dungeon's darkness to chafe away.

To chafe and to rage, and to vainly tear  
At the grate that bars you from light and air.

Your rage or your patience to him the same  
To whom your token of vengeance came.

Till your blood grow tame and your fierce heart feel  
For pardon it well could grovel and kneel.

For the feel of the breeze and the warm free sun,  
It could half wish its vengeful deed undone.

\* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \*

In Godstowe nunnery's shadowy gloom,  
Was "Rosa Mundi" carved on a tomb.

And the tomb's sides white fair roses crept up,  
Cunningly twined round a carven cup.

Prayed for with mass and with holy prayer,  
Chant and hymn, the Clifford lay there.

Still and carven in fair white stone,  
She lay in the quiet choir alone.

Till Lincoln's bishop, Hugh, pass'd that way,  
And enter'd the holy choir to pray.

And seeing that tomb, more fair than all,  
With its lights of wax and its silken pall,

And learning there Henry's light love lay,  
Commanded straight she be borne away.

Holding her pomp the Church's disgrace,  
Spurning her sin from its resting-place.

Now Mary Mother more mercy show,  
Than living, or dead, she knew below !

Now God from her soul assoil all sin,  
And give her at last unto bliss to win !

For what better bait can the Devil fling,  
For a woman's soul, than the love of a King !

Heaven rest her soul, and shield us all,  
And aid us to stand, and not to fall !

And Mary Mother give us to rest  
At last in bliss with the Saints so blest !





## PYGMALION.

How the white vision shaped it in my thought,  
How shall I tell! how in my nightly dreams  
I knew its presence, though I saw it not,  
In solitude — in cities — 'mid the hush  
Of forests — 'mid the throng and crush of men,  
With untold longings, thirsting more and more,  
Yea, hungering for its beauty! how with time  
I wrestled for that prize, yet won it not!  
How even to agony my soul was wrought,  
To tears and frenzy, yet I won it not!  
I felt its glory flooding through my soul —  
The chaos that should bring this wonder forth  
I brooded o'er — how long! how long in vain,  
Watching and waiting ere its beauty came!

Faint as a rainbow first it wander'd forth ;  
Misty and vanishing it met my gaze,  
Nor came, nor went, the creature of my will.  
Yet seems it not with gradual growth it grew,  
But in one golden moment leapt to light.  
O thrice-blest hour that bore her ! In a breath  
The veil was rent, and lo ! before my gaze,  
My thought's rapt gaze, that worshipped as it saw,  
She stood ; and was it given to me to fix  
Its haunting shape before my actual sense,  
Giving mine eyes its beauty ? Then I took  
Marble, and wrought, and wrought, how long in vain !  
Leaving the marble, marble, and not life.  
O blessed Gods ! yet knowing not despair ;  
O blessed Gods ! still grasping flying hope ;  
And one by one, I wrought her beauties forth,  
Clearing white brow, and breast, and lustrous smile,  
From gross embraces of the entombing stone,  
Till at the last, in still perfection, stood  
The white sweet wonder, silent in the sun ;

Silent, and yet how tuneful with sweet speech,  
Utterance divine, that from the listening soul  
Drew echoes, though the dull ear heard it not !  
And ever, as the summer breeze lays hand  
Upon the harp, and shakes its music forth  
In passionate sobs, and swells, and dying falls,  
So through me did that mystic spirit pass,  
Till all my being vibrated with love,  
And all my heart's hopes flutter'd round that stone,  
And my days wail'd unto it, white and cold,  
Silent and wordless, for a mortal love,  
Ever, with passionate moanings, for sweet love,  
Till life grew to one thought — one throbbing hope,  
And the great Gods heard but this prayer in heaven:  
“ O let her live, and my blest knees shall grow  
“ Unto your altar-steps in thankfulness !  
“ But let her live, and all my life shall be  
“ One sacrifice — thick incense steaming up  
“ Unto your footstools ! not with empty breath,  
“ O awful Gods ! ye know, I pour this prayer ;

“ I cry, even as the blinded cry for light,  
“ Even as wild mothers, in a slaughter’d town,  
“ Shriek o’er their babes for mercy ! Spurn me not,  
“ Dread powers, within whose lips are fearful joys,  
“ Are bliss unutterable — despair, and death !  
“ Ye crown’d eternities, whose will is fate,  
“ Ye, sitting in your high Olympian halls,  
“ Know only bliss for ever — not as we,  
“ Shades of an hour, whose days are dark with death,  
“ That perish with the lapse of fleeting years.  
“ What is our life to your eternity ?  
“ What were it, though we sat on golden thrones,  
“ And lived the lives of heaven ? a passing dream.  
“ Have mercy, Gods ! I sought not for this life,  
“ This mortal capability of pain ;  
“ Ye gave this air-drawn being to my frame,  
“ This hunger of the soul ye gave to me,  
“ Unasking. Gods ! from you, I took this thirst  
“ Of beauty, which, unquenched, what prayers were  
mine,

“ But for forgetfulness — for peace and rest,  
“ Deep ease, sweet rest, within a peaceful urn !  
“ What were it, Gods, though ye should bid her live !  
“ O let her live ! What were it unto you  
“ To lift this cup of joy unto my lips,  
“ O sweeter draught than ever Hebe bore !  
“ That I might drink and be even as a God,  
“ Knowing nor care nor sorrow of the earth,  
“ But only bliss—bliss for how brief a space,  
“ Ere Hades hold me, shade amid pale shades,  
“ Yet, spite of Lethe, wailing still for her,  
“ Ever for her—for her—alone for her !  
“ Why are ye deaf ? my prayer is in your ears,  
“ In the still night—at rise and set of sun,  
“ And through the glaring watches of the day,  
“ Crying this cry for ever—let her live !  
“ Olympian ! throne above all thrones of Gods !  
“ Hear me ! for thou hast known this fire of love,  
“ This burning passion to be clasp'd of one,  
“ Panting to Danaë in a rain of gold ;

- “ Protean, in Amphitryon’s bearded form,  
“ Quaffing deep raptures in Alcmena’s arms.  
“ Did not Eurotas see thee as a swan  
“ Burn unto Leda? thou whom Semele  
“ Saw a consuming splendour, hear thou—hear!  
“ In dear remembrance of those fever’d hours  
“ Of supermortal passion, make this shape  
“ Perfect with motion and all gifts of sense,  
“ Feeling, and thought, that I may know her love!  
“ O thou, foam-born! thou, whom the heavens have  
    heard  
“ Wailing the lost Adonis! unto thee  
“ I turn beseeching! Goddess! unto thee  
“ This beating fever of the burning blood  
“ Is worship, and pale passion’s pains and tears  
“ Thou view’st exultant; therefore, Goddess, hear!  
“ And I will worship thee—thee, only thee,  
“ Grasping thy snowy altars evermore.  
“ Lo! a deep vow I vow thee; hear my vow!  
“ Give this white silence breathing to my arms,

“ And ever shall a chorus chant thy praise,  
“ With solemn songs, within thy temple's bounds,  
“ Heard of the heavens, and earth, and rounding sea;  
“ And, in the sunshine, Aphrodite, here,  
“ Shall Cyprus bow before thy robeless self,  
“ Perfect in marble, by my chisel wrought,  
“ Fair as the blue waves saw thee, from the sea  
“ Rising, the glory and desire of earth.”

So rose my prayer ere the cold morning glared  
Athwart the East, and when the last faint flush  
Of latest evening died from off the west,  
In the hot noon and through the hush of night;  
And lo ! I cried not unto deafen'd ears  
Regardless. O my joy, sing forth their praise,  
And let thy thanks go up even as my cry,  
Pulsed from the inmost beatings of the heart !  
She lived ! she lived ! O life above all life  
Heaven-sent ! I gazed on life ; along her cheek  
Life flush'd ; life beat within her bosom's swell,  
In quivering eyelid and in softening lip,

In rosy limb and every violet vein.  
Gods! what a soul dreamed from her dewy eyes!  
What life within the tendrils of her hair  
Awed me with joy—with joy, even as I gazed,  
To stillness—but with joy—excess of joy!  
What could I do but gaze—but gaze and gaze,  
With fearful hope, beholding that fair dream;  
Breathing to heaven, if it were but a dream,  
So might I dream for ever! but that fear  
Each moment mingled more its night with light,  
Hope drawn; joy whisper'd that I lived awake;  
Awake! O never slumber had such dream!  
The sculptured creature of my hands was gone;  
A new Pandora there before me stood.  
Gods! what a beauty sat upon her brow!  
Not the white glory on great Here's own,  
Not laughing Hebe's whiter! O that smile—  
The very smile that burns love into Gods  
From Aphrodite's face! O glistening smile!  
O burst of sunlight on a darken'd world,



That smites its sobs to gladness ! lips as red  
As Hyacinthus' blood ! Ye heavens ! her words—  
Honey more sweet than ever Hybla hived ;  
You heard the Sirens seize Odysseus' ear  
With Circe's breathings ! Such a rounded arm  
Won Zeus to Maia ! tresses—nets of gold,  
Fit as lorn Ariadne's streaming hair  
To catch flush'd Dionusus ! One such look—  
For one I had laugh'd to outdare Alcides' self,  
And beard swart Hades ! Blessed gods ! she lived,  
And I had hearing but to drink her words ;  
Mine eyes had vision but to feed on her ;  
Hope—memory—thought—existence—from my brain  
She smote the world—earth—heaven—and all but  
her,  
And joy and grief—life—death—and all but her !



## A CHARACTER.

IN TWO SCENES.

---

LINA MERTON ..... *A Creole.*  
HELEN MERTON.....*Her English Half-Sister.*  
SIR VIVIAN MORDAUNT.....*A Poet, engaged to Lina.*  
NINETTE.....*Companion to Lina.*

---

SCENE I. — ENGLAND.

*Night. — A Bed-Room.*

LINA and NINETTE.

LINA. You hear me, Ninette; not a word of this !

NINETTE. No, Madam.

LINA.                                 If they ask you why I left  
So suddenly, and wish'd not one, good-night,  
Say—say—say anything: I'm reading — tired —

I'd try this dress on — I am nervous — vexed —  
But not a word of this — this foolish fit.

NINETTE. No, Madam.

LINA. And, I dare say he'll not ask,  
But tell me if Sir Vivian ask, or not,  
The reason of my leaving. Mind, I'm well.  
Good night. (*A pause.*)

Ninette! yes, put my pearls away  
Into their case. That's right. (*A pause.*)

And, stay! before  
I sleep (I'll read a little), let me know  
How long Sir Vivian stays. And — 'tis a whim —  
See if he talks much, Ninette; if he talks  
To any one for long. 'Tis a mere whim,  
A foolish fancy; but you'll let me know.  
He has not gone?

NINETTE. No, Madam.

LINA. No? — why no?  
You speak as if he stood here; I have left  
An hour; what makes him stay? There's in your eyes

A something that I'd hear straight out in words.

Speak out! I'd know why you are sure he's here.

NINETTE. Madam, I saw him, as you left the room

LINA. Speak to my sister — well?

NINETTE. The casement's open;

A moment since I'm certain that I caught

Their whispers on the terrace.

LINA. Whispers! fool?

They talk — they talk aloud; why should they whisper?

Then it is so; at last, I am not blind.

NINETTE. Madam, I only said, I thought

LINA. Speak out;

I will know all.

NINETTE. All? That is all — what

LINA. All?

Well — you may go; good-night! Put by that book;

I will not read. The night is strangely hot;

Throw wide the casement. All? You do not go!

NINETTE. O Madam! Madam! will you let me speak?

LINA. None of your pity — I've not fallen to that.

Not to have seen it! Slighted! spurn'd! cast off!

And she — this sister — smiling in my face!

I know your meaning: well, what would you say?

NINETTE. O Madam, have some pity on your sister!

I've known her from a girl, for we were girls

Together; and her nature is as kind

As

LINA. Mine is hard.

NINETTE. Madam, I said not that.

LINA. You only look'd it. Well?

NINETTE. She would not tread

Upon a

LINA. Sister? Ends the sentence so?

Girl, I'm no worm; and let them have a care

On what they tread! The fiery South has fangs —

I'm of the South — that, trodden on, you die.

NINETTE. O talk not so, my lady! I have watch'd,

Shuddering to think that it must come to this,

This evil love from its first growth. Believe me,

Though you may blame, you well may pity her.

D

He is a thing of change ; as unstable  
As the shifting wind ; one, weak — infirm of will —  
Who veers with every fancy. You must know well  
He cannot bind his purpose down to the act  
His reason urges ; so his love for you,  
Firm for some months, and therefore hot for change,  
The rather that she was your opposite,  
Flutter'd to her when she again was nigh,  
Through struggling scruples, that I could but see.  
And she, poor girl ! with tears and self-reproach,  
Urged on by passion — caught by the very looks —  
The very utterance that was dear to you

LINA. Enough of that : you'll spare to speak of me ;  
Speak of this sister, and of her alone.

NINETTE. She

LINA. Stay ; I'll tell you what this meek one did,  
All heart — all anything that I am not —  
She, that will daintily set free a fly,  
Balking the hungry spider, spite of God —  
This petter of canaries and of pups —

She, knowing this Sir Vivian sworn to me,  
With virtuous reluctance — sweetest ruth,  
A thousand things are plain — I see them now —  
Took pains to snare him; will she hold him too?  
And did her best to break her sister's heart;  
Though perhaps she guessed my heart was not quite such  
As novels deal with.

But, too much of this;  
The curtain rose so quickly for their play,  
I've been more wordy much than is my wont.  
But you've too milky blood — too little fire —  
To chat my secrets; you've a wholesome fear,  
Seeing me more thoroughly for what I am,  
Than most; though little do I wear a mask,  
And little do I care how much you've heard.  
Yet see you talk not; you'd not earn my hate.  
I've only said what, curse her! all must see —  
Will see — do see. O stone-blind dolt! ere this,  
Had I had natural eyes — you saw it plain —  
I had — when I forget it, bless her, Heaven! —

Not set a step — look'd in a face — not breathed  
At home — out — anywhere, but the meanest groom  
That ever crouched to the dust I trod, my scorn,  
I'd seen, had met me with his sneering pity,  
Looking to see me thankful for his alms,  
His charitable doles of "poor" and "poor,"  
As if I were a beggar at the gate,  
Whining for scraps! And I'm to love her still?

NINETTE. O Madam!

LINA. Off! why should I talk and talk,  
As if I were a school-girl, novel-bit?  
Go, now; but as the play will be played out,  
And all our sex since Eve have been the same,  
Curious to learn whatever's from them hid,  
I'd know, Ninette, whate'er your sharp eyes see.  
You think I'll wince to hear of what their love  
Must grow with — sugar'd words, and mingling sighs,  
And secret meetings — secret — mark you that!  
I scare them, trust me! always in their thoughts!  
But tell me all — tones — whispers — looks and smiles;



I know her Vivian's well. Fear not for me !  
The spasm pass'd for good that shook me first;  
And for the future you'll but see myself,  
No whimperer, but just one with curious eye  
(Perhaps a bitter one — by nature that),  
Who'll see each act through; just Faust's ancient  
friend,  
Much in his spirit — eyeing all their plans,  
To fashion to my taste this strange surprise  
They quake to show me. We'll enjoy it, girl,  
And study gentle spirits' gentle ways  
(Meek Walton's gentle hooking through his frog  
As though he loved him); reading for our jest  
Another leaf from nature's puzzling book;  
And marvelling, in their case, what ending time  
Will give their story — tragic-wise, you know,  
Some plots do end with sorrows and with death,  
Not closing pleasantly as others do,  
All tangles straighten'd, and all wrongs forgot,  
With marriage, comfort, and a world of sweets.

“What will be, will be,” so the proverb runs;  
Time hides and shows much; Ninette, we shall see.

NINETTE. I knew — I know ’t will have an evil end.  
What good could come of it? what end but ill?  
It must — it will

LINA. Nay, if you prophesy,  
A croaking raven, of revenge —

NINETTE. Revenge!  
I never named it.

LINA. Well, of ill, then — ill  
To this sweet pair, their sister must not hear.  
Not one word more: Ninette, I said, Good-night.

NINETTE. O Madam!

LINA. Close the door. [*Exit NINETTE.*  
O God! she’s gone,

And, for to-night, this mad self-mockery ends.  
I must be calm; I must be calm; there’s fire  
Within my brain, but I must not go mad.  
What’s “mad”? To act no purpose out — a reed,  
To bend to every gust that passion blows,

And yet not act — act all that reason wills;  
That were a hell to shrink from. Let me think:  
He loves — he loves her — loves her! Let me say  
The words again: I speak them, and my ears  
Hear them; loves her! they scarce have meaning yet;  
Loves her, not me; O Vivian, yesterday  
Through flowers and sunshine — now one bleak sharp  
turn

To utter barrenness that cannot end,  
For ever — ever! O that burning tears  
Would rain this weight of sorrow from my brain,  
And let me think unfrenzied of this blow!  
Weep? weep and groan? I will not shed a tear;  
Not one — not one. May the fierce fire I feel  
Blast them. O — O that I were God, to turn  
Their every day to sorrow! God, to scorch  
Their hopes to blackness! God, to make their love  
A hatred and a loathing! Am I mad,  
To rave and babble! What are storms of words,  
Unless, like the red hail that Egypt smote,

They burnt and blister'd ! O sweet sleep ! sweet sleep !  
When shall I know the sleep of yesternight !

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## SCENE II.

*Morning. — A Library opening on to a Garden.*

LINA *alone.*

LINA. O how I thirst and hunger, face to face,  
To curse them ! not to have seen it ! not to have seen  
What all were loud of ! I to be made the jest  
Of all in the house, down to the very scullion ;  
The kitchen's merriment — a moving joke —  
The jeer of the stables ! would that I could stab him !  
And be the rabble's wonder, days and weeks ?  
The news of papers, and the talk of taps ?  
Closed with the rope and hangman ? Stab her ? why,  
That, if one weighs it, is but poor revenge,  
Perhaps a loss of that for which one seeks ;  
No ; be not rash ; yet rein your passion in,

Though it should choke you, till occasion shriek  
“ Loose it ! ” — then — then ?    Why, here her Vivian  
comes ;

I'll scare my Damon.

[*Enter VIVIAN MORDAUNT*].

What you, Vivian, here ?

VIVIAN.    Why, is it strange to see me ?

LINA.

But so soon !

What miracles cannot that boy effect,  
The pigmy Cupid ! to have made you rise  
By this ! by nine ! nay, trust your eyes ! an hour —  
A whole full hour before you saw the sun,  
Unsmitten ; then too, sir, your stay was late,  
Or I'm mistaken, so the marvel's more ;  
What brings you ?    Why, the bees are hardly out,  
And larks alone, and labourers yet abroad ;  
' Come, tell me why you're here ?

VIVIAN.

Are you not here ?

LINA,    How sweet a compliment ! most neatly  
turned :

Ah! there you poets distance others so!  
Still, there's this trifling drawback from the worth  
Of all your flatteries, you so deal in — lies.

VIVIAN. I — lies? — Miss Merton?

LINA. O, I crave your grace,  
Sir Vivian Mordaunt, Baronet, M.P.—  
(Title for title) — if bare words affright,  
We'll mask them; this one shall have dainty trim;  
Your nerves being weak, we'll fit it for your sight,  
And call it — fiction; that's poetic phrase;  
Now own you're false.

VIVIAN. As false as all my tribe.

LINA. No falser? Well, you're of a lying crew;  
I'd best have shunn'd you.

VIVIAN. [*Aside*]. Does she know the truth?  
Or only banter in her bitter vein?  
[*Aloud*]. You'd best have shunned me? Why, your  
talk is strange.

LINA. The world is strange, Sir Vivian. Men are  
strange.

Life and its ways are stranger than I dream'd.

We live to learn strange wisdom.

VIVIAN.

Come — you deal

In riddles; I

LINA. Can guess them? can you? Do!

Do! — Nay, where's Helen? Helen shall be here

To praise your quickness; she might guess them, too.

Ah, here she comes; she has a pleasant face;

I know you love that it should bless your dreams.

[*Enter HELEN*].

Ah Helen, did you feel your ears afire?

I see your cheeks are burning; Vivian and I

Were talking of you. Why, how quick you're pale,

But now a poppy! I but told you, sister,

We talked of you. What could we say but good?

I love you — don't I? Vivian, do not you?

You love my sister?

VIVIAN.

Love? — your sister? — yes

LINA. Why there you two stand, tongue-tied — red  
and white,

As if, poor children, you were girl and boy,  
And feared a scolding. What have you to fear?  
Come, have you written anything of late?  
What, poet, not a sonnet, good or bad?  
Hand me that purple volume from the shelf!  
Not Tennyson — the next — a poet too —  
The gentler Browning; how I hoard them both!  
You've read her masterpiece — her Geraldine?  
Her Duchess May? that has the antique ring;  
She's great, because she's earnest.

VIVIAN.

True — her heart

Throbs through her sentences, and so they live.

LINA. Ah, here's a poem that is talked of much;  
You know it surely — Bertha in the Lane?  
What think you of it? Sure you know it, sister?  
The tale's a wild one; — not a jot from life;  
It must be fancied. On her dying bed,  
The elder of two sisters, — as 'twere I,  
You listening, — sobs into the younger's ears  
The untold sorrow that had made her die,



Heart-broken — how, hedge-hidden, in the lane  
That names the tale, her own betroth'd she heard  
Wooing her sister — both, so false to her;  
How she had locked this sorrow in her heart  
From all but heaven; and in her tender love  
For this false sister, she had made them one,  
And died to bless them, — blessing them, content.  
What think you of the story? Vivian, you?  
Surely a touching one, with tenderest love,  
And woman's noblest teachings over-brimm'd;  
One to fill eyes with purifying tears,  
And leave all hearts but better'd? Come, — I'd hear  
A poet's judgment of a poet's tale;  
Mind, of the tale — the story; for its form,  
Spare our poor ears a talk of rhymes and rules  
Obey'd or broken.

VIVIAN.                      Why, what can I say  
But echo your opinion? who can praise  
Enough the pen that such a wonder drew  
Of angel meekness? Who can

LINA.    And you think  
This patient sufferer was no puling fool  
To take her wrongs so lightly? Do you so?  
What thinks our Helen? Does she think so too?  
What not a word? Why, it is but a tale  
We talk of sister — it is but a tale;  
There never was a sister was so false.  
Nor ever yet a man, forsworn, so base  
As to make a sister turn a sister's days  
To bitterness. Have you a word for them?

VIVIAN. O Lina, Lina, 'tis an erring world,  
A world where all must suffer and forgive  
Much — evil, call it — who would win to heaven.  
And for this story that this poet tells,  
Might there not, Lina, might there not be said  
Something — a something even for those who  
erred ?

Say that a man who thinks he truly loves,  
And in that thought has pledged his faith to one,  
While yet he can change

LINA.                         While yet he can change?  
I thought you said his faith was pledged?

[illegible]

LINA.                      And what matters that?  
The whole earth is truth's altar. Palter not;  
There's not an instant but we front a God,  
Here — everywhere. Think you — think you that  
                heaven,  
Heaven asks of where and when a lie is lied,  
And holds speech nothing, spoken in the sight of God,  
And for eternity, false — true or false —  
As eternity shall teach each soul to learn ?  
O palter not; faith plighted 'neath a roof,  
On some square feet, made holy by a priest,  
Is not a whit more damning, being broke,  
Than troth sworn freely elsewhere on God's earth,  
That God has bless'd and sanctified himself.  
Go on.

VIVIAN. I did not say I did not blame

LINA. Blame?

VIVIAN. Ay, condemn

LINA. Condemn?

VIVIAN. What should I say?

LINA. Loathe — hate — curse — curse such false-  
ness — foul in him,

But fouler in the sister, base of heart —

(Give me that water!) she that did not spurn him

At the first breath of his baseness, but could plot,

And plot, and plot, against a sister's heart,

Stealing the very thing that made life sweet,

Without which life were but a thirst for the grave,

And days but lived for vengeance. Curse them! Curse  
them!

HELEN. O Vivian — Vivian!

VIVIAN. Look! your sister faints;

Helen — sweet Helen — drink, sweet Helen — Helen!

Sprinkle her forehead; Lina — Lina — mercy!

LINA. Mercy? I? Why it's but a poet's tale —  
Is't not — we talked of? You excusing breach

Of oaths, and those who broke them—I but speaking  
Even as my nature prompts me;—I'm not one,  
You know, for boudoir nicety of phrase—  
And spoke, in natural words, what such a baseness  
Would move me to—not being perfection quite,  
And weakness, like this wonder in the song,  
But a mere woman—flesh, and blood, and fire—  
That, stung, will sting, and, trodden on, will turn.  
It moved her strangely though. What could so move  
her?

Well, here's Ninette, and, as I like not scenes,  
I'll to the sunshine, and henceforth take care  
To criticize my favourites, and their songs,  
Seeing we treat them so as if they were truths,  
By myself, *au revoir!* see—she's coming to.



## ARIADNE.

MORN rose on Naxos, — golden, dewy morn,  
 Climbing its eastern cliffs with gleaming light,  
 Purpling each inland peak and dusky gorge  
 Of the grey distance, — morn, on lowland slopes  
 Of olive-ground, and vines, and yellowing corn,  
 Orchard, and flowery pasture, white with kine,  
 On forest, — hill-side cot, and rounding sea,  
 And the still tent of Theseus by the shore.

Morn rose on Naxos — chill and freshening morn,  
 And scarce the unbreathing air a twitter heard  
 From eave or bough, — nor yet a blue smoke rose  
 From glade, or misty vale, or far-off town;  
 One only sign of life, a dusky sail,

Stole dark afar across the distant sea,  
 Flying; all else unmoved in stillness lay  
 Beneath the silence of the brightening heavens,  
 Nor sound was heard to break the slumbrous calm,  
 Save the soft lapse of waves along the strand.

A white form from the tent,—a glance,—a cry.

“Where art thou, Theseus? — Theseus! Theseus!  
 where?

“Why hast thou stolen thus with earliest dawn,

“Forth from thy couch—forth from these faithless  
 arms

“That even in slumber should have clasp'd thee still!

“Truant! ah me! and hast thou learnt to fly

“So early from thy Ariadne's love!

“Where art thou? Is it well to fright me thus—

“To scare me for a moment with the dread

“Of one abandon'd! Art thou in the woods

“With all that could have told me where thou art!

“Cruel! and couldst thou not have left me one,

- “ Ere this to have laugh’d away my idle fears !  
“ He could have told thee all—the start—the shriek —  
“ The pallid face with which I found thee gone,  
“ And furnish’d laughter for thy glad return ;  
“ But thus ! to leave me, cruel ! thus, alone !  
“ There is no sound of horns among the hills,  
“ No shouts that tell they track or bay the boar.  
“ O fearful stillness ! O that one would speak !  
“ O would that I were fronting wolf or pard  
“ But by thy side this moment ! so strange fear  
“ Possesses me, O love ! apart from thee !  
“ The galley ? gone ? Ye Gods ! it is not gone ?  
“ Here, by this rock it lay but yesternight ?  
“ Gone ? through this track its keel slid down the shore ;  
“ And I slept calmly as it cleft the sea ?  
“ Gone ? gone ? where gone ?—that sail ! ’t is his ! ’t is  
his !  
“ Return, O Theseus ! Theseus ! love ! return !  
“ Thou wilt return ? thou dost but try my love ?  
“ Thou wilt return to make my foolish fears



- “ Thy jest? Return, and I will laugh with thee !
- “ Return! return! and canst thou hear my shrieks,
- “ Nor heed my cry ! And wouldst thou have me weep ?
- “ Weep! I that wept, white with wild fear, the  
while
- “ Thou slew'st the abhorrèd monster ! If it be
- “ Thou takest pleasure in these bitter tears,
- “ Come back, and I will weep myself away,
- “ A streaming Niobe, to win thy smiles !
- “ O stony heart ! why wilt thou wring me thus ?
- “ O heart more cold unto my shrilling cries
- “ Than these wild hills that wail to thee, return !
- “ Than all these island rocks that shriek, return !
- “ Come back ! Thou seest me rend this blinding hair ;
- “ Hast thou not sworn, each tress thou didst so prize,
- “ That sight of home, and thy gray father's face,
- “ Were less a joy to thee, and lightlier held ?
- “ Thy sail ! thy sail ! O do my watery eyes
- “ Take part with thee, so loved ! to crush me down !
- “ Gone ! gone ! and wilt thou—wilt thou not return ?

“ Heartless, unfearing the just Gods, wilt thou,  
“ Theseus ! my lord ! my love ! desert me thus !  
“ Thus leave me, stranger in this strange wild land,  
“ Friendless, afar from all I left for thee,  
“ Crete, my old home, and my ancestral halls,  
“ My father’s love, and the remember’d haunts  
“ Of childhood, — all that knew me, — all I knew, —  
“ All — all — woe ! woe ! that I shall know no more.  
“ Why didst thou lure me, craftiest, from my home ?  
“ There, if, thy love grown cold, thou thus hadst fled,  
“ I had found comfort in fond words and smiles  
“ Familiar, and the pity of my kin,  
“ Tears wept with mine, — tears wept by loving eyes,  
“ That had wash’d out thy traces from my heart,  
“ Perchance, in years, had given me back to joy.  
“ O that thy steps had never trodden Crete !  
“ O that these eyes had never on thee fed !  
“ O that, weak heart ! I ne’er had look’d my love,  
“ Or, looking, thou hadst thrust it back with hate !  
“ Did I not save thee ? I ? Was it for this,

“ Despite Crete’s hate — despite my father’s wrath,  
“ Perchance to slay me, that I ventured all  
“ For thee — for thee — forgetting all for thee !  
“ Thou know’st it all; who knows it if not thou,  
“ Save the just Gods — the Gods who hear my cry,  
“ And mutter vengeance o’er thy flying head,  
“ Forsworn ! And, lo ! on thy accursèd track  
“ Rush the dread furies; lo ! afar I see  
“ The hoary Ægeus, watching for his son,  
“ His son that nears him still with hastening oars,  
“ Unknown, — that nears him but to dash him down,  
“ Moaning, to darkness and the dreadful shades,  
“ The while thy grief wails after him in vain;  
“ And, lo, again the good Gods glad my sight  
“ With vengeance; blood again, thy blood, I see  
“ Streaming; who bids Hippolytus depart  
“ But thou — thou, sword of lustful Phædra’s hate  
“ Against thy boy — thy son — thy fair-hair’d boy?  
“ I see the ivory chariot whirl him on —  
“ The madden’d horses down the rocky way

“ Dashing — the roaring monster in their path ;  
“ And plates and ivory splinters of the car,  
“ And blood and limbs, sprung from thee, crushed and  
    torn,  
“ Poseidon scatters down the shrieking shores ;  
“ And thou, too late — too late, bewail'st, in vain,  
“ Thy blindness and thy hapless darling's fate,  
“ And think'st of me, abandoned, and my woe ;  
“ Thou who didst show no pity, to the Gods  
“ Shrieking for pity, that my vengeful cries  
“ Drag thee not down unto the nether gloom,  
“ To endless tortures and undying woe.  
“ Dread Gods ! I know these things shall surely be !  
“ But other, wilder whispers throng my ears,  
“ And in my thought a fountain of sweet hope  
“ Mingles its gladness with my lorn despair.  
“ Lo ! wild flush'd faces reel before mine eyes,  
“ And furious revels, dances, and fierce glee,  
“ Are round me, tossing arms and leaping forms,  
“ Skin-clad and horny-hoofed, and hands that clash

“ Shrill cymbals, and the stormy joy of flutes  
“ And horns, and blare of trumpets, and all hues  
“ Of Iris’ watery bow, on bounding nymphs,  
“ Vine-crown’d and thyrsus-sceptred, and one form,  
“ God of the roaring triumph, on a car  
“ Golden and jewel-lustred, carved and bossed,  
“ As by Hephæstus, shouting, rolls along,  
“ Jocund and panther-drawn, and, through the sun,  
“ Down through the glaring splendour, with wild bound,  
“ Leaps, as he nears me, and a mighty cup,  
“ Dripping with odorous nectar, to my lips  
“ Is raised, and mad sweet mirth — frenzy divine  
“ Is in my veins; hot love burns through mine eyes,  
“ And o’er the roar and rout, I roll along,  
“ ‘Throned by the God, and lifted by his love  
“ Unto forgetfulness of mortal pains,  
“ Up to the prayers, and praise, and awe of earth.”



## THE BOAT-RACE.

“ There, win the cup, and you shall have my girl.  
“ I won it, Ned; and you shall win it too,  
“ Or wait a twelvemonth. Books — for ever books!  
“ Nothing but talk of poets and their rhymes!  
“ I’d have you, boy, a man, with thews and strength  
“ To breast the world with, and to cleave your way;  
“ No maudlin dreamer, that will need her care,  
“ She needing yours. There — there—I love you, Ned,  
“ Both for your own, and for your mother’s sake;  
“ So win our boat-race, and the cup, next month,  
“ And you shall have her.” With a broad, loud laugh,  
A jolly triumph at his rare conceit,  
He left the subject; and, across the wine,  
We talked,—or rather, all the talk was his,—

Of the best oarsmen that his youth had known,  
Both of his set, and others — Clare, the boast  
Of Jesus'; — and young Edmonds, he who fell,  
Cleaving the ranks at Alma; — and, to-day,  
There was young Chester might be named with them;  
“ Why, boy, I'm told his room is lit with cups  
“ Won by his sculls. Ned, if he rows, he wins;  
“ Small chance for you, boy!” And again his laugh,  
With its broad thunder, turn'd my thoughts to gall;  
But yet I mask'd my humour with a mirth  
Moulded on his; and, feigning haste, I went,  
But left not. Through the garden porch I turned,  
But, on its sun-fleck'd seats, its jessamine shades  
Trembled on no one. Down the garden's paths  
Wander'd my eye, in rapid quest of one  
Sweeter than all its roses, and across  
Its gleaming lilies and its azure bells,  
There, in the orchard's greenness, down beyond  
Its sweetbriar hedge-row, found her — found her there,  
A summer blossom. hat the peering sun

Peep'd at through blossoms,—that the summer airs  
Waver'd down blossoms on, and amorous gold,  
Warm as that rain'd on Danaë. With a step,  
Soft as the sun-light, down the pebbled path  
I pass'd; and, ere her eye could cease to count  
The orchard daisies, in some summer mood  
Dreaming, (was I her thought!), my murmur'd

“ Kate,”

Shock'd up the tell-tale roses to her cheek,  
And lit her eyes with starry lights of love  
That dimm'd the daylight. Then I told her all,  
And told her that her father's jovial jest  
Should make her mine, and kiss'd her sunlit tears  
Away, and all her little trembling doubts,  
Until hope won her heart to happy dreams,  
And all the future smiled with happy love.  
Nor, till the still moon, in the purpling east,  
Gleam'd through the twilight, did we stay our talk,  
Or part, with kisses, looks, and whisper'd words  
Remember'd for a lifetime. Home I went,



And in my College rooms what blissful hopes  
Were mine!—what thoughts that still'd to happy dreams,  
Where Kate, the fadeless summer of my life,  
Made my years Eden, and lit up my home,  
(The ivied Rectory my sleep made mine),  
With little faces, and the gleams of curls,  
And baby crows, and voices twin to hers.  
O happy night ! O more than happy dreams !  
But with the earliest twitter from the eaves,  
I rose, and, in an hour, at Clifford's yard,  
As if but boating were the crown of life,  
Forgetting Tennyson, and books, and rhymes,  
Even my new tragedy upon the stocks,  
I throng'd my brain with talks of lines and curves,  
And all that makes a wherry sure to win,  
And furbish'd up the knowledge that I had,  
Ere study put my boyhood's feats away,  
And made me book-worm; all that day, my hand  
Grew more and more familiar with the oar,  
And won by slow degrees, as reach by reach

Of the green river lengthen'd on my sight,  
Its by-laid cunning back; so, day by day,  
From when dawn touch'd our elm-tops, till the moon  
Gleam'd through the slumbrous leafage of our lawns,  
I flash'd the flowing Isis from my oars,  
And dream'd of triumph and the prize to come,  
And breathed myself, in sport, one after one,  
Against the men with whom I was to row,  
Until I fear'd but Chester — him alone.  
So June stole on to July, sun by sun,  
And the day came; how well I mind that day,  
Glorious with summer, not a cloud abroad  
To dim the golden greenness of the fields,  
And all a happy hush about the earth,  
And not a hum to stir the drowsing noon,  
Save where along the peopled towing-paths,  
Banking the river, swarm'd the city out,  
Loud of the contest, bright as humming-birds,  
Two winding rainbows by the river's brinks,  
That flush'd with boats and barges, silken-awn'd,

Shading the fluttering beauties of our balls,  
Our College toasts, and gay with jest and laugh,  
Bright as their champagne. One, among them all,  
My eye saw only; one, that morning, left,  
With smiles that hid the terrors of my heart,  
And spoke of certain hope, and mock'd at fears;  
One, that upon my neck had parting hung  
Arms white as daisies — on my bosom hid  
A tearful face that sobb'd against my heart,  
Fill'd with what fondness ! yearning with what love !  
O hope, and would the glad day make her mine !  
O hope, was hope a prophet, truth alone ?  
There was a murmur in my heart of " Yes,"  
That sung to slumber every wakening fear  
That still would stir and shake me with its dread.  
And now a hush was on the wavering crowd  
That sway'd along the river, reach by reach,  
A grassy mile, to where we were to turn  
A barge moor'd mid-stream, flush'd with fluttering flags.  
And we were ranged, and, at the gun, we went,

As in a horse-race, all, at first, acrowd;  
Then, thinning slowly, one by one dropt off,  
Till, rounding the moor'd mark, Chester and I  
Left the last lingerer with us lengths astern,  
The victory hopeless. Then I knew the strife  
Was come, and hoped 'gainst fear, and, oar to oar,  
Strain'd to the work before me. Head to head  
Through the wild cheering river-banks we clove  
The swarming waters, raining streams of toil;  
But Chester gain'd, so much his tutor'd strength  
Held on, enduring, — mine still waning more,  
And parting with the victory, inch by inch,  
Yet straining on, as if I strove with death,  
Until I groan'd with anguish. Chester heard,  
And turn'd a wondering face upon me quick,  
And toss'd a laugh across, with jesting words:  
“ What, Ned, my boy, and do you take it so?  
“ The cup's not worth the moaning of a man,  
“ No, nor the triumph; tush, boy, I *must* win.”  
Then from the anguish of my heart, a cry

Burst: " Kate, O dearest Kate — O love — we lose !"

" Ah ! I've a Kate, too, here to see me win,"

He answered; " faith ! my boy, I pity you."

" Oh, if you lose," I answered, " you but lose

" A week's wild triumph, and its praise and pride;

" I, losing, lose, what priceless years of joy !

" Perchance a life's whole sum of happiness —

" What years with her that I might call my wife !

" Winning, I win her !" O thrice noble heart !

I saw the mocking laugh fade from his face;

I saw a nobler light light up his eyes;

I saw the flush of pride die into one

Of manly tenderness and sharp resolve;

No word he spoke; one only look he threw,

That told me all; and, ere my heart could leap

In prayers and blessings rain'd upon his name,

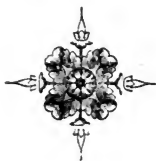
I was before him, through the tracking eyes

Of following thousands, heading to the goal,

The shouting goal, that hurl'd my conquering name

Miles wide in triumph, " Chester foil'd at last !"

O how I turn'd to him ! with what a heart !  
Unheard the shouts — unseen the crowding gaze  
That ring'd us. How I wrung his answering hand  
With grasps that bless'd him, and with flush that told  
I shamed to hear my name more loud than his,  
And spurn'd its triumph. So I won my wife,  
My own dear wife; and so I won a friend,  
Chester, more dear than all but only her  
And her's, the small ones of my College dreams.



THE SAGA  
OF  
THE FALL OF HARALD HARDRADA.

PART I.

HEAR the fame of Harald the strife-lover !

Hear the fall of Harald of the fair hair !

In his hall the son of Sigurd feasted ;

On the benches lay and drank his war-men.

On the hall-hearth redly blazed the pine logs ;

Fast the horns went round, with ale white-foaming ;

Then sang Snorr, the Scald, the rune-compeller,

The fierce Norse hearts joying with his sagas.

Through his chant was heard the clash of war-ships,  
Clang of shields and helms, and shrieks of slaughter.

For he told the war-deeds of Hardrada,  
Told the deeds of Harald the helm-cleaver.

“ Fiercely forth to ocean sweep his war-ships,  
“ Sweep his dragons forth — his fierce sea-roamers;

“ Halland sees, aghast, his gleaming war-shields;  
“ Valland glares with red fires of his kindling;

“ Well Northumbria knows his axe-men's war-play;  
“ White-lipp'd Mercia shrieks before Sigurdson;

“ Erin's widows wail his stormful coming;  
“ Bretland's maids remember well the Viking;

“ Hunger'd are ye, kites, ye yellow-footed?  
“ Follow far his steeds — his ocean-riders!



“ Norrasund's blue straits his swift keels furrow;

“ Serkland's spoils sink deep his sea-kissed gunwales;

“ Jorsalaland greets the mailed Norseman;

“ Loud the Greekland's city greets the Varing;

“ Home return his gilt-beak'd barks, deep-laden,

“ Laden deep with treasures, battle-gather'd;

“ Jarl and Bonder hail the King returning,

“ Joyful throne the sainted Olaf's brother;

“ Let the Danes' land well its green coasts buckler,

“ Shield its shore towns well from Harald's Norsemen!

“ White in ashes lie green Jutland's homesteads;

“ Swend, the Danes' king, shields not smoking Fyen;

“ Hela's ravening maw so well who gorges,

“ Joys so well the Dread ones — the Slain-choosers?

“ Grim the gory sword-strife at Nisaa ;

“ Sixty war-ships Swend lost in the sword-game ;

“ Why no more flaps death the dread Landeya,

“ Harald’s flag, the dreaded far Land-waster ?

“ Why no more heaps he the feast of ravens,

“ Sigurdson, the stern—the gaunt wolf-gorger ?”

Then up through the hall, stern strode Earl Tosti ;

Fierce he strode, the wrathful son of Godwin ;

And he spoke, “ O King, the white isle greets you ;

“ Knut’s throne longs to hold the son of Sigurd ;

“ Curses on the crafty son of Godwin,

“ He upon the throne of Edward seated !

“ Curses deep on him, born of my mother !

“ Who withstood me, Tosti, in my Earl-rights !

“ Not for long shall he escape my vengeance;

“ Many they who soon shall cry my war-cry;

“ Burgh, and thorpe, and grange, and tower are ready;

“ Thane and thrall shall muster to my coming;

“ King, send forth thy message through thy Norsemen!

“ London soon shall throne thee in its Minster.

“ Grasp the great sway held by Knut the mighty!

“ So with his thy glory shall be mated.”

Ceased the Earl, and loud round through the court-men,  
Hoarsely roll'd approval of his counsel.

But the King sat silent in his high-seat,

And on all the Earl spoke much he pondered;

Then arose the storm of song, fierce-chaunted;

Snorr's the Scald's song, sweeping all hearts warwards;

“ Launch the serpents! launch the gold-maned dragons!

“ Let their long keels cleave again the billows!

“ Let their dark sails hold again the storm-winds!

“ Let their tall masts creak before the tempests

“ Let the sun glow red upon their shield-rows,

“ On their steel scales rank'd along their bulwarks!

“ Swift, with strong-arm'd stroke, we sweep the ocean;

“ Swift our long oars smite the foam-maned billows;

“ Grey rise England's surf-swept cliffs to landwards;

“ Green her fields, and black her ports rise shorewards;

“ Deep our furrows cut the rushy Humber;

“ Dark our anchors cleave the Ouse's tideway;

“ Why so near to Yule-tide flash the Bael-fires?

“ Fast the beacons flame afar our coming;

“ Why do thane and thrall snatch down their war-gear ?

“ Fast from forest, moor, and dale, they muster ;

“ Fast the thickening tide of war rolls onwards ;

“ Fast the war-ranks pour towards the foemen ;

“ Well may Jovick's Earls their war-men gather !

“ Sore shall wall and tall tower need their bowmen ;

“ For he comes whose war-deeds scalds are chanting !

“ He, the shield-ring-breaker in the war-fray ;

“ Through the sleet of hissing arrows stalks he ;

“ Where the death-sparks leap from helms deep-cloven ;

“ War-cries, and the shrill-tongued yells of slaughter

“ Shriek the conquering war-way of Sigurdson.”

So sang Snorr, the Scald, and, to his singing,

Fiercely throb'd the war-men's hearts around him ;

And around the bearded court-men rising,  
Clash'd their liking of the stormy scald-song.

Then the rage of battle seized Sigurdson,  
The Berserker thirsting for the onset;

And his faith he plighted to Earl Tosti,  
And his word sped forth through shore and upland.

Fast his host have gather'd; through the tempest,  
Fast his dragons steers he towards the slaughter.



## A NEW GRISELDA.

SAY you that there 's no food for poetry  
In all the life around us — that our age  
Is too prosaic and mechanical,  
To find a subject for the poet's pen !  
Tush ! as well might the blind old beggar say,  
Who walks in night through this majestic world,  
That all the wonders that he cannot see  
Have no existence ; trust me, friend, in you,  
Not in the manners — spirit of our age,  
Or what else you have named, the reason lies.  
The want is yours ; a Shakespeare yet would find  
In many a drawing-room and busy street,  
Nay, in the squalid alleys of our towns,  
And in our very jails and workhouses,

Full many a pale Ophelia with her doom  
Struggling in vain, in wordless agony;  
Ah, if you had a Chaucer's eye to see !  
How many a meek Griselda round us bears,  
With uncomplaining misery of heart,  
The load her nature was not fashioned for !  
Why, if I were a poet, I could tell  
A tale of every-day unvarnish'd life,  
That should upon the common heart of all,  
Knock and bring tears for answer. In our place,  
A quiet village in the heart of Kent,  
There lived two families well known to all,  
For, through the country, not the oldest man  
Could tell the time when first to settle there  
The earliest of the Blakes or Hills had come.  
There had they, in their two white cottages,  
Father and son, dwelt on beyond the reach  
Of even our oldest memories; the boy  
Growing into labour as the aged man  
Grew out of it, and laid him down to rest.



A widower long, Nathaniel Blake was now  
Not old, but yet some half score years beyond  
The point where life slopes downwards, at the time  
My tale begins. How plain I see him now  
As if he were before me, tall and stern,  
With a firm step and an unbending gait,  
Though toiling years had touch'd his hair to grey;  
His eye — 'twas like a hawk's, as sharp and bright,  
An eye that few amongst us cared to meet,  
Even in its friendly greetings, so it seem'd  
To look the man it gazed on, through and through.  
'Twas said by those who knew him in his youth  
That none then show'd an eye or laugh'd a laugh  
More brimming over with a light heart's mirth  
Than he; his tongue dropp'd jokes and moving jests  
On all he met with; so he moved, a sun,  
To all our neighbourhood; with him gladness came,  
And often quoted sayings — harmless mirth,  
A very wealth of laughs remain'd behind.  
These were his boyish days; but manhood came,

And with it, all the usual cares of life,  
And many most men know not; he was tried,  
They say, most sorely; surety for a friend,  
His trusting kindness could not refuse,  
He lost the little wealth his father left,  
And sank at once, almost to beggary;  
He struggled hard with fortune, though his life  
At times was harder than he well could bear;  
Through want of needful comforts, want of friends,  
Of even bread itself, he struggled on.  
The first pale streak of daylight call'd him out  
To labour, and night found him still at work.  
He struggled manfully, and, well, at length  
He fought his way right up with his own arm  
To needful comfort, if not competence;  
But, in this sore-fought fight with fate, he lost  
All the light-hearted buoyancy of youth,  
Its laughs and playful mockeries; in their stead,  
Men saw a settled calm, that, if not stern,  
Was cold and distant far from his old mirth.

His words were few, and as we could but know,  
Even in his very kindest moments, cold,  
Though it was said his heart beat warm beneath.  
This was his common temper; but when roused,  
'Twas shown how much the world had sour'd its tone;  
His language then was harsh to one and all,  
Even to those who knew he loved them most.  
He brook'd not opposition; argument  
Would lash him into fury that would threat  
To root the best affections from his heart  
And fling them by, the victims of his will.  
One only child, a daughter, bless'd his home.  
Now, at the time I speak of, she had grown  
Into fair womanhood, but neither plain  
Nor very lovely could she well be call'd,  
But rather — she was neither in extreme,  
Excepting when she smiled, and then but few  
Could say that Mary was not sweeter far,  
And better worthy note and praise than some  
Who took the eye more when her smile was gone;

'Twas a sweet smile — so full of human love,  
Of gentle tenderness and kindly heart,  
Of meek and self-denying charity;  
It doubly bless'd her giving to the poor  
When weigh'd against the stooping-down disdain  
That fell with larger doles from other hands;  
She won on all that knew her, so that none,  
I'm bold to say, amongst us, harbour'd one  
Ungentle thought towards sweet Mary Blake.  
The very outcasts of the village, those  
Who lived the butts of every other's scorn,  
Receiving gentle services from her,  
Still felt they were not sever'd from their kind,  
And, feeling it, grew worthier; so they sought,  
As pleasures to be prized, to do her will,  
And run her little errands through the place;  
The very chickens of our village green  
Flock'd round her footsteps for her gracious gifts,  
And cats would try to nestle in her lap,  
And bleating lambs thrust noses in her hand,

To find the bread they seldom sought in vain.  
You knew her window that the jessamine  
And honeysuckle hung with draperies rare,  
By the brown sparrows on the garden trees,  
That hopp'd and twitter'd, perk'd their knowing heads,  
Or sharpen'd, on the bark, their tiny bills,  
In waiting for her morning shower of crumbs,  
That never was forgotten; the mazed bee  
That beat its wings against the sunny glass,  
And humm'd its longing to be out again,  
Her hand threw up the window for, and sent  
Through bed and border, noisy in her praise.  
I've seen her, twenty times, set free the fly  
From the fine meshes of the spider's web,  
And do a thousand acts as full of love,  
Towards the dumb brute-creatures in her way.  
So she was loved by everything that lived;  
And, loved by strangers, I need hardly say,  
That she was dear as sunshine, in her home;  
And, as she grew, grew tenfold in the love

Of her stern father, and became his pride.  
When but a child, her prattling tongue had been  
The only thing that brought his own old laugh  
Back on the coldness of her father's face;  
And, when she grew a girl, there hardly seem'd  
A thing that gave him such true, real delight,  
As anything he did that pleased her;  
For her the thrift that all his long, hard strife  
With poverty had used him to, and made  
A natural habit of his life, until  
Those knowing not the virtues whence it sprung,  
Call'd Blake hard names, close-handed, and so forth;  
His thrift, I say, with her became a thing  
Forgotten, or, if thought of, beaten down  
By the still growing love he bore his child.  
So lived she, loving and beloved by all;  
And, as years came and went, the prattling child  
Grew up into the girl; the laughing girl  
Became the calmer woman. Now, perchance,  
You ask if such a heart, so form'd for love,

Still treasur'd all its wealth of heart for home?  
If her unsumm'd affection were confined  
To acts of sisterly regard for all?  
Found she no one among our village youths  
To harbour some yet deeper feeling for?  
I answer, Yes; and so, I could be sworn,  
Young Edward Hill could then have answer'd too;  
For playmates in their childhood they had been,  
Twin hunters of the hiding violet,  
Trippers together through the April lanes,  
To find the treasures of their earliest May.  
They, in the summers of their childish days,  
Would roam the bright, green meadows, hand in hand,  
And bring a very wealth of king-cups home,  
Of silver daisies and pale primroses;  
There might you see them many a summer's day,  
Their sunny curls half-buried in the grass,  
With mighty heaps of field-flowers by their side,  
Sorting from all, the ones they loved the best,  
And tossing with a pretty, sweet disdain,

The lowliest of their gather'd hoards away;  
I've watch'd them often, and a sweeter sight  
I dare believe the summer never saw.  
At shearing-time, together still you found  
The tiny playmates, running in and out  
Among the thick-fleeced, shaggy, bleating sheep,  
And hiding from each other, oftener found  
By their own laughter, not to be kept down,  
Than anything besides; still were they seen  
At hay-time, side by side, in the heap'd fields,  
Rolling among the new-mown swathes of grass,  
And happy to their very hearts' content;  
And, when the last cart came in triumph home,  
Piled up to heaven with all its golden sheaves,  
Leaving but stubble for the seas of grain  
That dimpled in the dances of the wind,  
In the full corn-field—at our harvest-home,  
'Twas Mary Blake and little Edward Hill  
That rode together on old Dobbin too,  
Straddling with little outstretch'd naked legs,



Not easily across his broad old back,  
And laughing through the sunshine, not all blind,  
If I mistake not, to the many words  
Of admiration round them.

So they grew,  
And long the changing pleasures, hopes, and fears,  
The changing years brought with them, found the two  
Sharing alike their laughter and their tears,  
True honest partners in the game of life,  
The gains and losses of their ripening hearts,  
Dividing; long the passage of each day,  
Changing so many, wrought no change in them.  
As the child loved, the boisterous boy loved on;  
The youth, the boy's affection treasured up,  
With all the usury by the heart laid by  
To swell its sum with every season's growth.  
Ah, well I mind the scene when then a dance  
Together call'd our village neighbours round,  
To laugh away a frosty winter's night,  
And kill its quiet with their boisterous mirth.

How noisy then were all ! how to its height,  
Enjoyment leapt, till all was merriment,  
And ceaseless motion, and unmeasured talk !  
How the cold hearts of aged folks beat fast  
In the tumultuous laughter of the hour,  
And young again, and thoughtless of their years,  
Half thrust them off their soft old quiet seats,  
To join the happy dance they idly watch'd  
From the red blaze of the huge piled-up fire,  
Whose crackling logs out-roar'd the very wind  
Without, and drown'd its voices in their own !  
In such a scene, when every heart was glad,  
And sadness, finding theirs no place for it,  
Went moaning off to wait for fitter time,  
You 'd little need, if Mary Blake were there,  
To run your eye along the lusty line  
Of our young bachelors, a tiptoe all,  
Waiting their turn to whirl their partners off,  
To tell if Edward Hill were there or no,  
For, in her absence, in her vacant gaze,

That, though it look'd on all the scene around,  
Seem'd not to see it, straying somewhere else;  
In the neglect her partner's questions met,  
That steep'd in rustic flattery to the full,  
Yet for a moment, honied as they were,  
Drew not a word of notice, till at last  
Their recollection woke upon her mind,  
And brought some sudden answer, short reply,  
Some single word, a hurried "Yes," or "No,"  
Which said, the blush that just had stain'd her cheek  
With sweet confession of her short neglect,  
Died off again and left her as before,  
In all these things, to those who chose to mark  
Their presence, lay the words, "He is not here,"  
And round for Edward you might look in vain.  
But O how different was the look she wore  
When he was present ! Lip and eye and cheek  
And the full rush of her young glad heart's mirth  
Let loose to pour its treasures on the sight,  
And dance and wanton in the eye of night,

Why all and each a hundred answers gave  
To tell to every one that he was there;  
There, there, her partner, facing in the dance,  
An Easter sun among the lesser lights  
That, sparkle as they might to others' eyes,  
By him, were dim and lustreless to her.  
These were their childish days, but little change  
Their youth found in them, save that, it may be,  
Edward found pleasure in far more pursuits  
That were not shared by her than when a boy.  
His dog — a gun — a horse — a hundred things  
Had power to draw him from her gentle side,  
And to divide his thoughts and hopes with her;  
Hence did it happen that whole days would come  
And go, without his entering once their door,  
While Mary moved like sunlight, sadden'd through  
The weeping clouds of April, through the house,  
With looks that spoke his absence, which her talk  
Dwelt not upon, though now and then a word  
Would drop by chance, or, it may be, a sigh

Would tell too well the current of her thoughts,  
And how her heart was brooding over him;  
But then he came; the April clouds were gone  
With all their twilight showers that seem'd to serve,  
Now they were gone, to render but more bright  
The bursting splendour of the cloudless day,  
In the deep joy of sunshine, flooding all,  
Till very sadness brighten'd in its touch  
And sparkled into gladness in the light.

There are some natures in this world of ours  
That walk the earth with spirits wing'd for heaven,  
So meek, so wholly strange to selfish thoughts,  
That injuries in them wake no sense of wrong.  
You might as soon to fierceness stir the lamb,  
Or from the soak'd fleece strike the granite's fire,  
As draw a spark from gentleness like theirs;  
Heap on them ills on ills so numberless  
That patience hardly could the load endure,  
And, like the o'erladen camel, they shall sink

But never murmur. Gentle souls like these  
Do move among us, and of such was she.  
Hence she of Edward's absence took no note  
As of a thing to marvel at or blame;  
One meek strong love her being so possess'd,  
Such sense absorbing of her low desert,  
That she had bought him smiles with weary tears,  
With heaviest sobs had told her days away,  
To lighten his, nor dream'd he owed one thought,  
One poor, short, passing memory to her;  
His love she never took as gift for gift,  
Affection for affection, thought for thought,  
But as man takes the charities of heaven,  
As bounteous blessings, rain'd without a claim  
On our unworthiness, and fitly own'd  
With praise and lowliness and humble joy.  
Not so her father. Mary long had grown  
A want so needful to his widow'd home  
That, stinted of her presence, his old years  
Had been as peaches hidden from the sun,

Mark'd, not for mellow ripeness, but decay.  
No thought had he, long after years had borne  
Her childhood from her, of a coming time  
When his old ears for her accustom'd foot  
Should listen vainly, and his aged eyes  
No more would lose their dimness following her.  
And, when at last time show'd the truth it hid,  
The bitterness of his old life came back,  
Hardening yet more his nature, hard before.  
Strange it had been if Edward, bleakening thus  
To winter, the mild autumn of his days,  
Had found that favour in the father's sight  
That met him in the daughter's; natural 'twas  
The want of him should, in the old man's eyes,  
Be dearer than the presence; so you'd guess,  
And so, at last, we plainly saw it was;  
Yet all of this was felt far more than said,  
For, though his tongue familiar was with words  
Harder and harsher than the thoughts they spoke;  
And, though his speech could little brook a curb

On the straight utterance that its purpose told,  
Yet for the doting love he bore his child,  
And, if I err not, it may be, perchance,  
From something of old fondness for the boy,  
Blake ever stay'd the quick, harsh words, that rose  
At Edward's coming, and had, utter'd, bid  
The youth to never cross his threshold more.  
And so the change towards him show'd itself  
In alter'd tones, and want of the old smile,  
And hearty joke, and greeting when they met,  
More than in open speech; and still the house  
That had, through happy years, been to the boy  
Another home, to him remain'd the same  
In all but in its alter'd owner's looks  
And lack of cordial welcome, when he came;  
And so it had remain'd, but for an act,  
The very turning-point of this sad tale,  
That brought a crisis in poor Mary's fate,  
And gave the old man's smother'd passion vent.

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Now cursèd be the tyrant laws that set  
The worth of game above the good of men,  
That for the matter of a wild bird, crowd  
Our loathsome prisons with the pride and youth  
Of all our villages, and turn to shame,  
To vagrancy, and crime, lives that had else  
Borne to their country fruit of worthy deeds,  
Of honest industry and useful toil;  
Bootless it were to try to prove to such  
That God's wild creatures, fresh from out his hands,  
Are but for luxuries for the favour'd few,  
And never meant to be a joy to all;  
The man that from a plain and open theft  
Would start in horror, ay, would turn to starve,  
Will see, in this, no act of shame or wrong,  
While even the daring that the crime demands  
Adds a wild pleasure to the poacher's life.  
Around our village lay wide-spread preserves,  
Own'd by the reverend guider of our souls,  
And by our squire, both dealers out of law,

Both deeply sworn to put all poachers down ;  
Adjudging their own wrongs, their vengeance wrung  
Its sternest reading from the vengeful law ;  
And many a felon at the gallows' foot  
Could trace up his career of crime to them,  
An honest labourer, ere their sentence thrust  
Him nameless out to herd with desperate crime.  
Now Edward poach'd, as all his fellows did,  
And, bold and daring, laugh'd to scorn all fear,  
Till, mark'd and watch'd, on one September night,  
The keepers came upon him ; overpower'd,  
He fronted justice, a convicted man.  
What boots it to repeat a common tale,  
How, fair in fame, before the jail be trod,  
He blasted left it, poor in honest hopes,  
And rich in promise of despair and crime !  
Ah ! I remember, as 'twere yesterday,  
That bright September morning when I call'd  
At neighbour Blake's, and learn'd the bitter truth  
From weeping Mary, while, through sobs that burst,

Convulsions of her being, rose, in words  
As broken as the heart that utter'd them,  
Her father's stern command that never more  
Should Edward's name be spoken in their home;  
That never more, if she held dear his love,  
Should word of Edward Hill be heard by her.  
Well might her tears be rain'd like wintry hail,  
Her sobs come thick and fast as Autumn's own!  
Often, thank God! the madnesses of wrath  
The kindly sense of memory will not hear,  
And time forgets them; but who knew him best  
Knew well, let who would carve resolves in air,  
Her father's sunk in marble, hard as life,  
By time less worn than deepen'd; therefore, well  
Did Mary see how misery bade her weigh  
Loss against loss, and treasured love with love,  
A father's blessing with a husband's faith,  
Each won with agony of such a want  
As beggar'd all to come of perfect joy,  
And dimm'd the future's dearest smiles with tears.

There stood she; and, through blinding mists of grief,  
Saw life depart from father, comfort, home,  
All early fondnesses and old respects,  
Or, through all after-being, take its way  
Afar from hope, youth's fondest dreams and love;  
O dull in heart is he who, ask'd her choice,  
Ponder'd to tell; need have I to repeat  
How love, in its great passion, trod o'er fear,  
And prostrate joy and duty to its end?  
The feeblest, in its mighty strength, are strong,  
And fears are reckless in its hardihood.  
So she quail'd not to look with steady eye  
On partnership in shame, and blacken'd name,  
In chance of penury, and dread of want,  
And misery, scorn'd of pity and relief;  
Beyond them look'd her eye, to where love stood,  
And all between was as she saw it not.  
She left her home; she left her father's sight,  
Dogg'd with his curse, to share a felon's fate;  
For joy and sorrow, she became a wife;

And time stole on, until their names became  
But as the remnants of a half-told tale,  
That rose with pity and conjecture sad,  
When the eye fell upon her father, now  
A childless, broken, solitary man,  
More worn with stern and tearless strife with grief,  
And silent agony of heart, than years;  
Never her name was known to pass his lips,  
But all who look'd upon him, saw his love,  
Laughing to scorn his will, dared hoard it still;  
Long afterwards it was, before we knew  
How, spite of all, his stern old purpose held;  
Little we guess'd that his firm heart had brook'd  
To hear his dear, dear girl—his darling child—  
His Mary beg, in bitterest want, of him,  
Closing all ear of pity to her prayer;  
Yes, she had written—written in despair—  
In want of bread had written. First, it seem'd,  
Turning their steps towards London, Edward hoped,  
Flying the knowledge of his guilt, to gain

Honest employ, that so long diligence  
And upright years again might make his name  
A thing to utter with no sound of shame;  
Of yet calm days hope babbled; but, alas !  
Hope is no constant prophet of the truth;  
Who once has breathed of prison air, henceforth  
Loathed of his fellows, walks a tainted man;  
To him all paths of good are ever closed,  
All ways to crime unbarr'd and open wide.  
Dogg'd with a felon's name, he sought for work,  
And sought it vainly; month on month went by,  
Lowering their slender stock of means and hope;  
Till front to front with utter want they stood;  
Then Mary wrote; she told of faults atoned  
In hunger, disappointment and despair,  
A future — fear; a present — misery;  
Came there no answer ? Yes; “ Come back,” it said,  
“ Leave you your husband, daughter, and return !  
“ My home is yours, but it is none for him,  
“ And all shall be forgotten; else henceforth

“ Know not your father, girl ! ” tears drown’d the note,  
And nevermore from her the old man heard ;  
But let me hasten ; for a time again  
All trace of them we lost, save that there came,  
I know not how, a rumour to our ears,  
That Edward, urged of want, to evil ways  
Had turn’d, a drunkard and a ruin’d man,  
Familiar with all modes of crime and sin ;  
And often, round our evening cottage fire,  
Our thoughts would be of Mary, and our talk  
Shape darkest fancies of her state of life,  
Her sufferings and her sorrows ; well we knew,  
Bred in the strictness of a pious youth,  
Much had she changed, if guilt and vice to her  
Had grown familiar, and conjecture closed,  
Almost with hope’s half prayer, that, ere this,  
Within the quiet of the grave she lay,  
Where grief is not and weariness hath rest ;  
Alas ! alas ! how otherwise it was !  
O Power Supreme ! thy ways are hard to man,

And faith alone has strength to read them right,  
Good out of suffering brought — from evil, good.  
Business to London call'd me, when, it chanced,  
Running my eye across the morning's *Times*,  
What should it light on but poor Mary's name,  
Prologue to such a bitter tale of wrong  
As memory yet companions with quick tears.  
It seems that Edward, bitter with despair,  
Turn'd on the cold hard world that on him trod,  
And headlong threw him down the depths of crime,  
Till he had fathom'd, ere yet well a man,  
The last abysses of all guilt and sin;  
Herding with vilest lives and shameless ill,  
His being shaped itself on all around,  
Till he, in wil and inward impulse, moved,  
A thing his sinless soul had shudder'd from;  
Oaths, desperate as his days, were words with him,  
And, hour on hour, the hellish fire of drink  
Raged in his brain and burnt along his blood,  
Fled of remorse, of meekness and of good,



Till love, their fellow, desolate and lone,  
Last lingerer, with slow steps and turn'd eyes, pass'd,  
Leaving to savage thoughts and brutal deeds,  
The unholy life that it no longer stirred  
To acts and words that had some touch of heaven.  
And Mary, how bore she the spites of fate ?  
Lower'd she to his level, day by day,  
Soiling the spotless whiteness of her soul,  
Dragg'd down by love's own strength from purity ;  
Or kept she still her sinlessness of youth,  
Girt in from ill with childhood's Sabbath ways,  
Its infant piety and holy prayers ?  
The closing horror of her hapless fate  
No utterance gave distinctly, yet led on  
The following thought, by glimpse and broken hint,  
To all but surety that her latter life  
Held swerveless on its early blameless way,  
Till murder with strange horror strode her path,  
And, even for her pureness, smote her down ;  
'Twas known the law's grasp, closing upon him,

Had never laid its wrathful hand on her,  
And, in the night of blood to which I tend,  
The dwellers in the house, before her shriek,  
Caught threats and curses and disjointed words,  
As of one urging to some deed of sin,  
Another vainly, while prayers, pray'd in vain  
By Mary, gave refusal to his will;  
Then came fierce bursts of wrath, and then a shriek,  
And heavy feet that fled along the stairs;  
And, as they rush'd towards the sight of death,  
A parting glance of him proclaim'd them his;  
Upon the bare room's bloody floor she lay,  
A sight that to the flying murderer's eyes  
Should have been madness; he had struck her down,  
And they who found her in her senseless form,  
Saw little life; even while I shuddering read,  
Within a hospital, she dying lay,  
Within a prison, he. No time I lost,  
Urged by strong interest in her hapless fate;  
In haste I went, and, as a well-known friend,

Urged my request to see her. I had come  
Most opportunely, for, the by-gone night,  
After a weary strife of sense with death,  
Life for a moment won; that morning, Sir,  
I found was order'd for the solemn act  
Of her accusal of her murderer,  
For, though life with a fitful brightness shone,  
It was a farewell flicker ere it sank,  
We saw; O Sir, O Sir, it was a thing  
To flood the eyes with sorrow for a life,  
To stand, as I did, by her dying bed,  
Looking upon the wreck that lay below.  
Poor thing ! poor thing ! through what a thorny track  
Of agony and sickness of the heart  
Must she have wander'd, ere she sank to this ;  
So changed from her old times of joy and smiles,  
That memory hardly on her face could find  
One feature of its knowing; worn and thin,  
With an unnatural lustre of the eyes,  
Through which, with ghostly fire, the parting soul

Peer'd through its mortal dwelling on the world,  
She lay, with pinch'd sharp features, whiter than  
The ghastly bandages around them bound,  
And lips that, moving, utter'd not a sound,  
As though the spirit communed with itself;  
Her eyes met mine, and once, the old sweet smile  
A moment trembled on her hollow cheek,  
And a weak shadow of her happy self  
Stole back a fleeting moment and was gone;  
She named my name, and would have spoken; alas !  
A coming tread had fix'd her eager eye  
And struck all else into one utter blank,  
In which the world, all circumstance and time,  
Were blotted out and nothing: o'er her face  
The ghastly memory of that fearful night  
Shudder'd, and in her sight her murderer stood.  
No, not the Edward of her girlish love, —  
No, not the husband of her woman's faith, —  
He stood before her, one whose sullen front  
Was reckless sin; half master of its dread,

To hers his fearful eye stole struggling up,  
But, daring not the accusal of her look,  
Fell from the depth of love within her gaze,  
That love that trembled through her faltering words,  
“ Edward, my Edward — I accuse you ? I ?  
“ O gentlemen, he could not — ’twas not he —  
“ A dream — a shuddering dream — it’s all forgot ;  
“ O husband, kiss me — kiss me once again,  
“ Your own fond wife — and Edward, when I ’m gone,  
“ Husband — my husband, think of me but as  
“ That Mary, she that smiled your heart away  
“ In the old years — that loved you to the last,  
“ O Edward, Edward, how, no words can say.”

Upon her pillow back she sank, her eyes  
Shut in exhaustion ; but about her lips  
Wander’d the blessedness of such a smile  
As gladden’d with its joy the songs of heaven,  
A smile that told of injuries forgiven,  
And all of earth but peace and love forgot ;

A moment more, that glory on her lips,  
Without a sound, she pass'd to find that rest  
The weary find within the quiet grave.

Now there's a tale that by our Mitford told,  
Our Wordsworth, or in the haunting music sung  
Of him who wrote of Dora, should have power  
And reign eternal o'er the hearts of men,  
Wedded unto the sweetest tears of time.  
Go, study them, and see how life is life,  
Despite of clothings, customs, forms and creeds,  
To eyes that see, as theirs, our nature bare;  
Trust me, the heart still throbs and breaks the same,  
Laughs with the laugh and lives the very life  
Of all the ages; go — go — study them !



## FROM SEA.

O IT was not for my mother,  
    Though dear she is to me,  
Though old she is, and poor she is,  
    That I sail'd the stormy sea!  
But it was for my true love,  
    That dearer is to me,  
Than father and than mother both,  
    'Twas for her I sail'd the sea.

The wind blows fair and freshly,  
    Right fresh for Harwich bay,  
For the cottage on its sandy cliff,  
    That I think of night and day;

That I think of, and I dream of,  
And have dreamt of night and day,  
In 'calm and storm, and south the line,  
A thousand leagues away.

Now, watch, look out to leeward !  
The land must sure be near.  
There looms the cape through the morning mist,  
That I 've long'd to see appear ;  
To see it rising from the waves,  
For it shields the quiet bay,  
Upon whose cliffs the cottage stands  
That I 've pray'd for far away.

Now, men, the sails be furling !  
Now let the anchor go !  
At our brown ship's side, let our best boat ride,  
And the oars be shipp'd below ;



And while the rope you're casting off,  
Take in my chest and me;  
Now farewell, blustering captain,  
And farewell, roaring sea !

Now pull—pull with a will, boys,  
And beach right high the boat;  
For dear, dear is the land to me  
That have toss'd so long afloat;  
And dear, dear is the girl to me,  
With each breath, loved more and more,  
Yon girl whose brown hand shades her eyes,  
To see us pull ashore.

She shades her eyes a moment,  
O that the beach were near !  
Does she see my torn hat waving ?  
Does she catch my cry from here ?

Yes; down the cliff she 's flying;  
Pull — pull, my men, for life,  
That I may kiss again my girl,  
My bonny, bonny wife.



## WISHES.

ON Bramshill's terrace walks Lady Clare;  
O were I the purple peacock there  
That 's petted and smoothed by her hand so fair !

Lady Clare strolls through Bramshill's grounds !  
O were I one of those white greyhounds  
That, patted by her, break off in bounds !

O happy falcon ! O might I stand  
Hooded and jess'd on Lady Clare's hand,  
To stoop at the heron at her command !

In Bramshill's chamber a cage is hung;  
O that to its gilded perch I clung,  
To be coax'd by her as I scream'd and swung !

O were I the silver cross, so blest !  
In Bramshill's chapel devoutly press'd,  
By Lady Clare, to her heaving breast !

By Bramshill's carven confessional chair  
Kneels Lady Clare, her heart to bare;  
O were I the grey monk listening there !

But ah ! that I were the locket of pearl  
In her bosom hid ; or, more blest, the curl  
It treasures ! O prized love-gage of the Earl !

Ride on, O Earl, by her palfrey's side !  
O that I by Lady Clare might ride !  
That she were to be, O Earl, my bride !



## WHAT THEY SAID AT THE STRIKES.

GAUNT and grim was the hungry crowd  
From whose heart this chant rose wild and loud.

Yes, men of trade, we have our rights,  
We drudges, — we — the poor;  
The right to serve, — the right to want,  
To work, and to endure;  
The fireless grate — the freezing bed —  
The racking aches that seize  
The bones and sinews of the poor,  
Ay, we've our right to these.

Rights? — brutish lives of untaught vice, —  
Minds stunted, — health unstrung, —  
The sallow cheek, — the shrivell'd form, —  
Thoughts that were never young;

The squalid court, — the garret bare, —  
The hunger, never sure  
The coming day shall bring its bread, —  
Such rights have we — the poor.

Fools! — fools! — to doubt your laws of wealth,  
To hold THAT truth's untrue  
That hands us over, old and young,  
Slaves, men of gold, to you!  
Slaves? — slaves? — I lie; — to such as we,  
The slave's work, true, you give,  
But, need us not, and you deny  
The right of slaves, to live.

Your Unions? — and had I forgot  
Your christian love sublime,  
That doles a diet out to want  
'Twould blush to thrust on crime?

Said I, we workers have no rights ?

Forgot I that we 're born

To all your guardians' kindly cares, —

Your workhouse meals, and scorn ?

Work ? — work or none, your horse, your hound,

You care for, as of worth ;

Men are the only things of life

You starve from off the earth ;

What matter ! — have your wise not found,

This world, God only made,

To grope for wealth — its only want,

Prosperity to trade ?

Your laws ? — what are your laws to us ?

We have not wealth or birth ;

Dear justice — game laws — ignorance — want —

These preach to us their worth ;

Your army where no poor men rise, —  
Your rich men's ruling — ay,  
We know it by the tax on tax  
Our poverty must pay.

Ay, doubtless, we but burden earth !  
For what do such as I,  
But all your luxuries — all your wants,  
And wildest whims, supply ?  
What gain you from our pauper days,  
But all you ever need ?  
All, from the weak and ragged lives  
Whose wants you never heed.

What ? — labour's free ? — leave things alone —  
'Tis best ? — and say you so ? —  
Alas, this freedom so you vaunt,  
What 'tis too well we know ;—



We glut your markets; bid us hire  
On which life scarce can live,  
Our birthright, want, compels us down  
To drudge for what you give.

Machinery — blessing that shall be,  
It shall not have our curse,  
Though now it heap but wealth on few  
And make our doom but worse;  
Hope sees a day when, from its good,  
Its present ills shall fall —  
When, strong to free the strength of man,  
'Twill bless and comfort all.

Men, shall we bless your social state  
That shame but to us metes, —  
That gives our infants to your jails —  
Our daughters to your streets? —

Your hulks we have;—where are your schools?

Hear you not wisdom preach,

They sow the whirlwind, who prefer

To smite instead of teach?

No—all man's wants I fail to find

In this your one word—wealth;

Wealth, pampering few, gives it to all,

Mind—comfort—leisure—health?

The social state that gives not these,

As self-condemn'd, I hold;

The common rights of men, with me,

Outbalance all your gold.

Front me not with your priestly cant;

God gives enough for all;

Who say, he wills that one should want,

Them, foul blasphemers, call.

'Twere well your comforts and our needs  
To rivet with His nod,  
But think not, we, our man-made ills,  
Will father upon God.

Why poverty must always be,  
You rich may plainly see,  
But, trust me, that the matter, Sirs,  
Is not so plain to me;  
Change lots;—try want;—one little week  
Such reasons new shall show  
That, ere 'tis gone, I've trust, your faith  
Shall strange conversion know.

Thank God ! we can dream of a time  
When want shall cease from earth,  
When, Heaven's good gifts enjoyed by all,  
Not one shall curse his birth;

It comes—it comes;—despite your scoffs,  
The black East hath its gleam;  
The future shows God's love no lie,  
His justice not a dream.

Utopian?—nay, spare not your jeers;  
We hold them at their worth;  
Wild dreams?—dreams, wild as ours, ere this,  
Have walked, as facts, the earth;  
How was the holy wisdom mocked  
Our reverence bows before,—  
The wild dreams, dream'd by love long since  
On Galilee's blest shore!

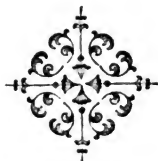
Lo, knowledge breedeth discontent  
And strong resolve for right;  
Justice is throned for rule, the hour  
The millions know their might;

Sublime it comes—the reign of love—

The longing of all eyes;—

It nears—the future of our dreams,

An earth for ill too wise.



## COLUMBUS.

DEDICATED TO THE NEW-WORLD-SEEKERS OF TO-DAY.

O MONARCHS, yes, beyond the sea,  
My sight the far new world descries;  
Let us be gone! "O come to me,  
"Come and be blest!" the new world cries;  
O monarchs, there, for you is peace,  
Release from hate, and care, and fear;  
O sovereigns, let your doubtings cease!  
Let us begone, O kings, from here!  
I am not mad; no, monarchs, no;  
On! to the glad new world we'll go.

Heed not your tinsell'd courtiers' sneers,  
The doubts by priest and noble said !  
I know they name me but with jeers ;  
I pass, they laugh and touch the head ;  
What though each lord with courtly air  
Would bid you hold me as a fool,  
O hear me ! peace shall glad you there ;  
O'er happy realms you there shall rule ;  
I am not mad ; no, courtiers, no ;  
On ! to the glad new world we'll go.

Yes ; let us go ! upon the strand,  
Rigg'd for the voyage, each galliot lies ;  
Soon shall we launch them from the land ;  
Ah, whence are those imploring cries !  
" O go not—go not—heed not him !  
" Seek not to cross the endless main !  
" Dupes of a brainless madman's whim,  
" Your homes you ne'er shall see again."  
We are not mad ; no, people, no ;  
On ! to the glad new world we'll go.

Yet still upon the affrighted air,  
Come shrill-voiced prayer and frantic cry,  
And still they shriek, "O sons, beware!  
"O husbands, stay! you go to die;"  
Around us, cling young child and wife,  
And hardly will be torn away;  
Their cry, "O dear to us as life,  
"Stay, father dear! O husband, stay!"  
We will not stay; no, dear ones, no;  
On! to the fair new world we'll go.

Hurrah! the old world fades behind;  
Upon our voyage we speed at last;  
Be calm, O sea! blow fair, O wind!  
Ah, friends, what means yon floating mast!  
Does it not tell some fearful tale  
Of dangers that our course await,  
Of some, before us doom'd to fail,  
Despair and wreck and death their fate!  
And shall this stay us, brothers? No;  
On! to the glad new world we'll go.



Out in mid-ocean far we sail ;

Fair blows the breeze ; the air is balm ;

Ah, treacherous winds, how soon you fail !

Alas, what means this endless calm !

Beneath the stirless heaven we lie,

And o'er us creeps a nameless fear ;

What, are we doom'd, becalm'd to die,

Fixed on the airless ocean here ?

O, faint of heart, no—brothers, no ;

On ! to the glad new world we'll go.

Ah, wildly now the tempests wake ;

Fierce blow the winds ; the billows rise ;

Foaming, the mad seas on us break ;

O Lord ! in mercy hear our cries ;

O thou great God, that bid'st the waves

Be still, release our hearts from fear !

O are we doom'd to find our graves

Far in the raging ocean here !

Let waves roll high ; let wild winds blow ;

On ! to the fair new world we'll go.

But no ; O raise to God the psalm !

Praise him with prayer and solemn song !

Look ! look ! before us, dim and calm,

The looked-for land for which we long ;

On ! — on ! — with all the speed you may !

Quick, on your barks, fresh canvass crowd !

Ah, shore and headland fade away ;

Alas ! alas ! they were but cloud !

Yet, what though cheated with a show

On ! to the fair new world we'll go.

O still have hope ! O murmur not !

O think not of your homeward track !

Cease your fierce chidings ! brothers, what,

You will not turn all hopeless back !

No ; to the winds all doubtings fling !

Green land-weeds, see ! surround each bark ;

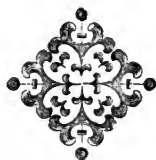
Hark ! those are orchard birds that sing ;

See ! there a light gleams through the dark ;

Ho ! watch at prow and mast-head ! ho !

Fast, to the fair new world we go.

God's people through the desert pass'd ;  
But to the promised land they came ;  
We sail through dangers ; but at last,  
We too, O friends, shall do the same ;  
And, O what glory ours shall be  
When there our peaceful sails are furl'd,  
And men the perfect bliss shall see  
Of this, our new discovered world !  
On ! morning shall the fair land show ;  
On ! to the new world gladly go.



## RESURGET.

### THE FAITH OF THE PEOPLE.

SWATHED, and bound, and tomb'd she lies,  
Yet again our dead shall rise.

Lo ! the kings of earth have slain  
Her who over all shall reign.

Here, in night and utter gloom,  
Watch we, weeping by her tomb.

God, our God, who all hath known,  
From her grave shall roll the stone.

God, who knoweth all our woe,  
In His time, shall mercy show.

What though she be laid in earth !  
She shall know another birth.

Nor shall earth or hell have power  
'Gainst her, in her coming hour.

Her they slew, who never dies ;  
Shout ! our dead again shall rise.

Lo ! arm'd men beside her stay,  
Lest our dead be borne away.

Lest, a horror to their eyes,  
She, our sheeted dead, shall rise.

Lo ! their watch in vain is set ;  
Who her coming forth shall let !

Not like to a thief shall she  
Come ; proud shall her coming be.

Like unto a mighty king,  
Like an arm'd one conquering.

Woe, then, woe, in that her day,  
Unto those that bar her way !

Woe, and utter woe to those,  
From of old, her vengeful foes !

Shout ! the Lord hath heard our cries ;  
Shout ! the blessèd one shall rise.

Woe to them her words condemn !  
Let the mountains cover them !

Lo ! the hills her shout shall hear,  
And shall dread ; the earth shall fear.

Who her steps in wrath shall meet,  
She shall tread beneath her feet.

Let the accuser fearful be;

Let the evil witness flee.

Lo! the judge shall hide his face,  
Trembling, in the judgment-place.

Shout! a fear to all men's eyes,  
Shout! the avenging one shall rise.

Lo! the earth shall own her, Lord,  
Strong to lift and to reward.

Earth shall tremble in her sight,  
Swift to judge and strong to smite.

Ye who trust in sword and spear,  
Fear her!—let the mighty fear!

Fear her, all ye high and strong,  
Ye who 'gainst the poor work wrong.

Dread, ye crown'd ones, dread her sight,  
Ye who for us work'd not right.

Nought shall, 'gainst her, stand of all,  
Shield, or tower, or armèd wall.

Ye who live not for the light,  
Tremble ! waning is the night.

Ye whose works are evil, fear !  
Lo ! the day is drawing near.

We who by her watch and pray,  
Lo ! for us there shall be day.

Glory unto God, and praise !  
He their doom, from her shall raise.

Lo ! His coming shall be swift ;  
He their curse, shall from her lift.



She shall speak, that now is dumb,  
And the dead one forth shall come.

There shall be a shining light;  
She shall stand in all men's sight.

Lo ! the grave-cloths, fold on fold,  
From her limbs shall be unroll'd.

She shall wake and walk, who slept;  
She shall comfort us who wept.

She shall banish all our fears;  
She shall dry our bitter tears.

Who her cup of grief would quaff,  
Shall arise, and feast and laugh.

With our hymns the day shall ring;  
Lo ! our crown'd one forth we bring.

Sing ye, West, and East, and North !  
Sing, thou South !—your queen comes forth.

Bring ye myrrh and spices sweet,  
Precious oils to bathe her feet.

Shout ye ! from her darksome prison,  
Lo ! the buried one hath risen.

Praise ye God, for this her birth,  
This great joy unto the earth !

Praise Him, all ye nations ! ye  
Who her coming long'd to see !

Praise Him, all ye peoples ! raise  
Hymns and songs to sound His praise !

Shout ye ! from her darksome prison,  
Our triumphant one hath risen !

## THE JUDGMENT OF MIDAS.

HEAR what Apollo sang, and what, rough Pan,  
To Midas, listening, dull-eyed, judging each,  
Beneath the coolness of a stirless pine,  
What time the noon its heaviest shadows threw  
Down Ida's slopes, and, save each voice and pipe,  
Alternate, not a sound the valley heard,  
Save only where one hot cicada sung.  
First sang Apollo, shaking lightly back  
From the high whiteness of his swelling brows,  
The golden glory of his clustering curls,  
" Harken, O Midas ! not to thee I sing  
" As to one fetter'd by thy golden gift  
" Unto the low delights and hopes of earth ;  
" But as to one, earth-born, yet above men

- “ Favoured—one, lifted by the Gods, a God,  
“ Dealing the good or ill thou will'st to man.  
“ What are the pleasures and delights of sense  
“ That I should sing them unto such as thou !  
“ Not with such, grovelling, will I soil my song,  
“ Brutish or flesh-defiled; O Midas, hear  
“ Thoughts that a God should hear—a God should speak.  
“ Evil and good, what are they unto thee !  
“ Not sounds that falsely image to thy soul  
“ The thoughts and things they show to sights impure;  
“ Their evil not thy evil, nor their good  
“ Thy good shall be. Not sloth, not restful hours,  
“ Thy gold shall grasp, rejoicing!—unused life,  
“ If that thy sumless treasures to thee gave,  
“ Better wert thou the neediest of thy slaves,  
“ That fate, with bitter goad of all men's wills,  
“ Scourges to labour, so, from out thy toil,  
“ Should help and some poor good for man be wrung;  
“ Oh, heed not thou the false and luring voice  
“ That whispers of the poor delights of ease,

“ Of slumbrous nights, and dull unfruitful days,  
“ These thou shalt loathe, enjoy’d,—enjoy’d and past,  
“ Leaving no after-life of glorious thoughts  
“ Of labours garner’d—the full harvest won.  
“ Lo, gold is power, or power for good or ill,  
“ And oft, o’erweighted with the lustrous load,  
“ Have high resolves, white-wing’d, full-plumed for  
    heaven,  
“ Waver’d aloft, o’erburden’d, but to fall,  
“ To flutter in the miry ways of life.  
“ Spurn thou its rule. Rule thou its strength. Thy slave,  
“ So shall it minister to loftiest ends,  
“ And lift thee, mortal, to that higher life  
“ Of nobler toils and struggles for thy kind  
“ Than others compass, such as strain’d the strength  
“ Of Herakles, ere yet he rose, a God,  
“ O’er labours vanquish’d, toiling up to heaven.”  
Ceased the full song, yet still the sultry noon  
Listen’d, even as when Philomel hath ceased  
Beneath the moon, the rapt night hearkens on,

Ravening for more of her melodious swells  
And gushings of rich sweetness. Then two sounds  
Throbb'd through the silence; one, the deep-drawn  
breath

Of Pan, recovering from the God's strong sway,  
And one, far deeper, by dull Midas drawn,  
Roused by the stillness from his sultry doze.  
Twitching a hairy ear—a mocking laugh  
Round his brute mouth and wrinkling all his cheeks,  
Lover of cream, the goatherds' God began:  
“ Earth-born, O Midas, live alone for earth,  
“ Nor miss its pleasures for an untried heaven.  
“ Sweet are the plenteous gifts earth has for thee,  
“ And dear the joys that every season brings,  
“ The young spring's brightness — the hot summer's  
shade —  
“ The autumn's harvests, fruits, and vintage mirth,  
“ And winter's ruddy gatherings round the hearth,  
“ While the loud tempest, howling, beats without.  
“ Ease is thine own; thine, gold; why should'st thou toil?

- “ Swift comes the day, when to the dreadful shades  
“ Thy steps descend; live!—yet thou livest; live!  
“ Live! — wise are they that wring from out their days  
“ The wine of joy — the nectar of delight.  
“ Crown thee with roses, Aphrodite’s flower,  
“ The violet and the jasmine, newly blown!  
“ Wreath thee with arms more white than Ida’s snows,  
“ But, O, more warm than these deep valleys’ noons,  
“ With wild hot throbs through every violet vein  
“ Pulsing delight. Sun thee ’neath azure eyes,  
“ Dewy with passion,—languid with sweet love,  
“ Brighter than frostiest stars, — lit with desire.  
“ What joy more sweet than, from the fiery glare  
“ Shadow’d, beneath the cool of forest boughs,  
“ Or in some ivied cavern’s mouth to lie,  
“ With honied whispers murmuring in thine ears  
“ And burning kisses evermore rain’d down  
“ On half-oped eyes and brow and lip and cheek —  
“ Mouth sealed to mouth, the rich breath breathing in,  
“ In golden dreams forgetting all but joy!

“ Wreathe me with sun-bathed droopings of the vine !  
“ Bind me, O Dionusus, in thy chains !  
“ Thy slave I would be — ever, be thy slave ;  
“ Brim me this beechen bowl with wild delight !  
“ Wine — give me wine — fierce wine, the drink of gods !  
“ Drink, mortal ! draughts, more sweet than Hebe bears,  
“ Earth, in these violet clusters, stores for thee,  
“ Nor dearer sound has, than the gurgling flow  
“ Of the bright gladness, from the wine-bag’s mouth  
“ Leaping ; drink — laugh and love ! lo, these are life ! ”  
Then Midas, brute-like, gave the prize to Pan,  
And, in the moment that he stretch’d it forth,  
A golden pipe, chased by the lame God’s hand,  
On his dolt’s head he felt the dull ears rise,  
And in the stream, he saw himself, an ass.





## A SAILOR'S SONG.

“ WOULD you be a sailor's wife ?

“ Beware !

“ Would you share a sailor's life ?

“ Take care !

“ For, oh ! a sailor's life must be

“ Spent away on the far, far sea,

“ And little of him his wife may see —

“ Not she.”

Yet still she cried, “ Whate'er betide,

“ A sailor's wife I'll be;

“ For the winds with health his brown cheeks fill,

“ And the sea's fresh life is in him still,

“ Not the land's weak heart: say what you will,

“ A sailor's wife I'll be.”

" Would you be a sailor's wife ?

" Beware !

" Would you share a sailor's life ?

" Take care !

" To the savage sea he is wedded groom,

" And grief shall your weary life consume,

" And widow'd nights and days your doom

" Must be ! "

Yet still she cried, " Whate'er betide,

" A sailor's wife I'll be ;

" If weeping partings we must know,

" He'll come again though he must go,

" And, oh ! to think he'll come back ! oh !

" A sailor's wife I'll be."

" Would you be a sailor's wife ?

" Beware !

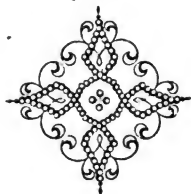
" Would you share a sailor's life ?

" Take care !

“ O, worse than absence, there may be  
“ A grave for him in the far wild sea,  
“ His young babe's face he may never see,  
“ Nor thee !”

Yet still she sigh'd, “ Whate'er betide,

“ A sailor's wife I'll be ;  
“ For whether the land or deck be trod,  
“ All lie at last beneath wave or sod,  
“ And all are in the hand of God ;  
“ A sailor's wife I'll be.”



## A SUMMER INVOCATION.

O GENTLE, gentle, summer rain,  
Let not the silver lily pine,  
The drooping lily pine in vain  
To feel that dewy touch of thine;  
To drink thy freshness once again,  
O gentle, gentle, summer rain.

In heat, the landscape quivering lies;  
The cattle pant beneath the tree;  
Through parching air and purple skies,  
The earth looks up in vain for thee:  
For thee, for thee, it looks in vain,  
O gentle, gentle, summer rain.

Come thou and brim the meadow streams,  
And soften all the hills with mist;  
O falling dew, from burning dreams,  
By thee, shall herb and flower be kiss'd:  
And earth shall bless thee yet again,  
O gentle, gentle, summer rain.



## BABY'S SHOES.

O THOSE little, those little blue shoes !

Those shoes that no little feet use !

O the price were high

That, those shoes, would buy,

Those little blue unused shoes !

For they hold the small shape of feet

That no more their mother's eyes meet,

That, by God's good will,

Years since grew still,

And ceased from their totter so sweet !

And O, since that baby slept,

So hush'd ! how the mother has kept,

With a tearful pleasure,

That little dear treasure,

And, o'er them, thought and wept !

For they mind her for evermore  
Of a patter along the floor,  
    And blue eyes she sees  
    Look up from her knees,  
With the look that in life they wore.

As they lie before her there,  
There babbles from chair to chair,  
    A little sweet face  
    That's a gleam in the place,  
With its little gold curls of hair.

Then O wonder not that her heart  
From all else would rather part  
    Than those tiny blue shoes  
    That no little feet use,  
And whose sight makes such fond tears start.



## ELLA'S ROSES.

VENUS, unto thee, the rose,  
Summer's darling, told her woes,  
Told how she, the queen of flowers,  
Loved of all the lingering hours,  
Glory of the radiant day,  
Only came, to pass away,  
Beauty of celestial birth,  
Fading with the things of earth,  
Meanest things of mortal breath,  
Poorest things, but worthy death;  
Then, foam-brow'd, thy laughing look,  
For a moment, joy forsook,  
For a moment, till thy thought  
Gave the boon thy favourite sought,  
All thy darling dared to seek,  
Changeless life in Ella's cheek.



TO A MOSS-ROSE IN CHEAPSIDE.

WHAT you — you flush our City air,  
You, summer's boast and pride,  
You, born to show all things most fair  
Less fair by your sweet side!  
What with our fev'rish thirst for gold  
Have you, sweet thing, to do!  
Where all things else are bought and sold,  
Rose, will they barter you!

Why not! O welcome, welcomed, come,  
Of hidden nature speak,  
Of whom all else is here so dumb,  
Our thought of her grows weak;

Show us, with more than this poor life  
Of streets, we have to do !  
Adieu to all the City's strife!  
I'm far, sweet rose, with you.

What pleasant thoughts you bring to-day ;  
What leafy country hours,  
Haunts where the long day dies away  
From grass-plots heap'd with flowers !  
With fountain'd lawns, my eyes you bless ;  
Green walks I loiter through ;  
In peace and garden quietness,  
I dwell, sweet rose, with you.

Ah, now a cottage front you bring,  
A porch cool shadows fill,  
Up which sweet honeysuckles cling,  
And wander at their will ;

The vine is green, and you I see  
The casements peeping through,  
The glowing summer noon for me  
Is flush'd, sweet rose, with you.

O quiet thoughts, stay with me ! Stay,  
You leafy summer hours !  
Ah me ! but life must deal to-day  
With other things than flowers !  
Come, City fears ! come, work and care !  
Adieu, sweet dreams, adieu !  
Of thoughts, full poor must be the share  
I give, sweet rose, to you.

O drooping bud ! O weary change,  
This grey and stony street  
For all that to our eyes is strange,  
All yours were wont to meet !

Yet I too, nature's child, I pine  
Her far-off face to view;  
As weary are these thoughts of mine  
As those that wither you !



## ON A PORTRAIT.

WERE the mighty Merlin's wand  
Waved within my wizard hand,  
And, in its great power, I said,  
" Face as fair as e'er hath been,  
" Sweetest eyes that earth hath seen,  
" Soft with life, or calmly dead,  
" Appear !"

Methinks, across the magic glass,  
The while I gazed with wondering fear,  
This pictured form would, queen-like, pass,  
And voices from the charmed air,  
Charmed tongues mine ears would hear,  
Whispering, " Mortal, ask'st thou where  
" All of fairness is, most fair ?  
" 'Tis here !"

## SONG.

I SAID, " O Art, unto my eyes,  
    " Her matchless charms for ever give !  
" In that sweet life that never dies,  
    " For ever let her beauty live ! "  
And Art his eager pencil plied  
    To paint her charms, all charms above;  
But soon, " In vain I strive," he cried,  
    " O who can paint her—who, but Love ? "

I turn'd to Fancy; " To my sight,"  
    I murmur'd, " from the glowing air,  
" O let her gaze my soul delight,  
    " As if she lived before me there ! "

At Fancy's call her image came ;  
O not her charms, all charms above !  
Poor Fancy's cry was but the same ;  
" O who can paint her — who, but Love ? "

Then mighty Love, with laughing joy,  
The pencil seized with wild delight,  
And, ere I well could mark the boy,  
She laugh'd in life before my sight ;  
O who, like him, such brows could draw,  
Such dark sweet eyes, all eyes above ?  
Like him, could paint the charms I saw ?  
O who can paint her — who, but Love ? "



## FROM TOWN.

AWAY, my thoughts, away !  
We'll from the town to-day ;  
Yes, we the quiet hours will know,  
That tranquil nature can bestow,  
Where green hills rise, and rivers flow,  
And landscapes stretch away  
To circling skies that, all below,  
Round in with airy grey.  
Away, my thoughts, away !  
We'll from the town to-day.



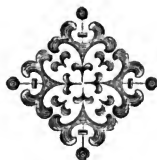
O joy, to be away  
From the hot town to-day !  
To feel the grass beneath my feet,  
To feel the skies my blest eyes meet,  
Lord ! but it makes my heart to beat  
To feel how far away  
Are care and toil — the loud full street,  
And the dim City day !  
O joy ! to be away  
From the hot town to-day !

O joy ! I'm far away  
From the dull town to-day !  
Now, stretch'd at length, I thoughtless rest,  
My careless head thrown back, and press'd  
Upon that pillow it loves best,  
The green sweet meadow grass ;  
While, with the sultry quiet bless'd,  
I watch the slow clouds pass.  
O joy ! I'm far away  
From the dull town to-day !

O bliss ! I'm far away  
From London's roar to-day !  
Beneath the worn, wild cliffs, I please  
My eyes with sight of mighty seas  
Swept shorewards by the whistling breeze,  
And feel the salt sea spray  
Dash'd on my face, and breathe in ease,  
While the gusts 'gainst me play.  
O bliss ! I'm far away  
From London's roar to-day !

O bliss ! I'm far away  
From the vext town to-day !  
Now, on some mighty mountain's side,  
I see the mists of morning slide  
From the wide landscape, still more wide  
Stretching, each step I go,  
Far lakes, and vales, and seas, descried,  
In sunshine bathed below.  
O bliss ! I'm far away  
From the vext town to-day.

O bliss ! I'm far away  
From toil and care to-day !  
Now, on some grassy meadow-stream,  
I watch the play of shade and gleam,  
And see the placid angler dream  
The quiet hours away,  
While all things men most strive for, seem  
Not worth a thought to-day.  
So bear me far away,  
Blest fancy, many a day !



## MOVE ON!

My taste, good Sirs, no loiterers please;  
When such the public watchman sees,  
Suspicious, straight his words are these,  
Move on !

The social safety, well he knows,  
Is apt to suffer most from those  
Whose loiterings their designs disclose:  
Move on !

Look, then, on all with honest fear,  
Our age's words who will not hear,  
Though still its cry rings loud and clear,  
Move on !

Ho ! priests, who think you Churchmen still  
Need only weekly pulpits fill,  
Nor care a whit for social ill,

Move on !

You who, for justice, give us law,  
And clench a wrong with learned saw,  
Of clamouring right, in reverent awe,

Move on !

You statesmen ! be it understood,  
You rule but for the people's good,  
You who would loiter if you could,

Move on !

Ah ! you who kill or cure us, learn  
There may be something to discern  
In newest truths that most you spurn ;

Move on !

You who your souls to trade have sold,  
Who only breathe to grasp and hold,  
Has life no better worth than gold?

Move on!

You slaves of forms and schools of art,  
Clasp naked nature to the heart,  
Till from the embrace, fresh beauty start;

Move on!

What, poet, is the past to you?  
There stands existence; look it through;  
Give words to what men feel and do:

Move on!

WERE I A KING ! WERE I A KING !

MY UTOPIA.

WERE I a king — were I a king,  
How royally my crown I'd wear !  
The jewell'd sceptre in my hand,  
For more than empty rule, I'd bear ;  
From those who rail and jest at thrones,  
Far other speech, methinks, I'd bring ;  
My power I'd have by all beloved,  
Were I a king — were I a king.

No Chancellor within my realm  
Should rule a court, my people's curse ;  
No law should make, with vile delays,  
My justice, than injustice, worse ;

To right all wrongs, my judge should sit,  
Not, from the wrong'd, their all to wring;  
Ho! leeches of the law, you'd starve,  
Were I a king — were I a king.

My courtiers? — nobles such as mine,  
When—when by such have Courts been trod?  
Not noble by their fathers' names,  
But holding all their rank from God;  
Mill, Carlyle, Dickens, Herschel, Lough,  
Such, round my throne, should greatness bring;  
To Tennyson, should Earls give place,  
Were I a king — were I a king.

Ho! statesmen — you to whom I give  
The evils of my realm to cure,  
Just laws, I'd say, and righteous make,  
Alike for all — for rich — for poor;



To squalid hearths — to hungry homes,  
Look that your rule some comfort bring;  
Food, leisure, health, I'd have for all,  
Were I a king — were I a king.

Not over all that ignorance breeds,  
Brute vice — rank evil, would I rule;  
No street of all my crowded towns,  
No village, but should boast its school;  
To loathe the wrong — to love the right,  
My teaching, soon, should all men bring,  
Nor jail nor gallows shock the sight,  
Were I a king — were I a king.

You, Cambridge — Oxford, would I say,  
Not for a class's good, you stand;  
Your ancient founders will'd your halls  
To hold the neediest of the land;

Away with thought of sect and rank ;  
Your doors to genius open fling ;  
Give welcome unto all — I'd say,  
Were I a king — were I a king.

Loved of the lowly and the poor,  
My church's reverend priests should live,  
To unjust power — to titled vice,  
Not shrinking stern reproof to give ;  
Isaiahs of to-day, their cry  
Should, strong to smite all evil, ring ;  
Pauls, they should serve in truth their God,  
Were I a king — were I a king.

Go forth, my people, would I say ;  
Off with you — off — you swarming bees ;  
From this o'ercrowded hive, go — bear  
Your English strength beyond the seas :

The will to work you have; away  
To where your work shall comfort bring;  
Go — greater Englands found, I'd say,  
Were I a king — were I a king.

What parks I'd for my people plant !  
What gardens for their walks should bloom !  
My palaces — I'd welcome, sirs,  
Mechanics' feet to every room;  
With holidays my realm should shout;  
Enjoyment free to all I'd fling;  
My pictures should make poor men glad,  
Were I a king — were I a king.

You smile; yet some perchance may take  
For truths, what you but fancies call;  
There needs the will, we have the power  
To give some gladness unto all;

Ah, he might throne him in our hearts,  
Who'd strive to do what I but sing,  
What I so feel I'd long to do,  
Were I a king — were I a king.



## THE DEATH-MARCH OF WELLINGTON.

“ WHOM bear you thus with heavy tread,

“ With arms reversed, and brows deprest ?”

“ Comrade, we bear the mighty dead

“ In glory to his place of rest.

“ A nation throngs the city's ways,

“ In grief for him whose race is run ;

“ On, in dark state, beneath their gaze,

“ Comrade, we bear great Wellington.”

March — slowly march — hark ! in the hush, I hear

Assaye's hurrah, and Badajos' cheer.

Yes — o'er him let the trumpet wail,  
And round him roll your muffled drums;  
In this last hour, who now shall fail  
In open grief for him who comes?  
Its solemn swell the Dead March pour,  
In grief for him whose deeds are done;  
Grief, let the mighty cannon roar,  
As on we bear great Wellington.  
March — silent march — hark! in the hush, I hear  
Vittoria's shout, and Salamanca's cheer.

On — bear him on to where they sleep,  
Our greatest, whom we name with pride;  
Lay him by Moore, in slumber deep;  
Lay him by Abercrombie's side.  
Nay — place him by the only one  
Who fixed, with him, red victory's smile!  
Room for the dead, by him who won  
For us Trafalgar and the Nile!  
On — bear him on — hark! in the hush, I hear  
Toulouse's charge and St. Sebastian's cheer.

Throw wide the doors; dust unto dust;

O'er him the yawning marble close;

Give him to death with trembling trust,

Calm in his last stern cold repose.

In reverent silence, in the gloom

Brooding beneath the mighty dome,

Conqueror, to share the conquer'd's doom,

Leave him to fame in his last home.

March — comrades, march — hark ! in the hush, I hear

Quatre Bras' hurrah, and Waterloo's fierce cheer.



## THE ROBIN,

A TALE OF EMIGRATION.

### ENGLAND.

My thoughts are like our April,  
Now sunshine, and now tears,  
As I think I leave for ever  
This pleasant home of years;  
But, cheer you, sweetest wife,  
Ay, be of blithesome cheer;  
As happy days we'll spend afar  
As ever we knew here.

They say the land we're going to  
Yields corn that turns to gold;  
None need, they say, to labour there  
Till years behold them old —



Till leisure's self is pluck'd  
All blasted with the blight  
That's eat away its very heart,  
Its power to yield delight.

Come, dry your eyes; your garden, wife,  
For that, nay, never grieve;  
There kingly flowers shall bloom for you,  
Shall shame the ones you leave;  
Who'll think of the wan daisy—  
Who'll the primrose pale recall,  
In the presence there of regal flowers  
That bow in wonder all?

There the waratah holds its state  
Deep in the forest's shades,  
And with the glory of its pride  
Lights up the lonely glades;

The indigo there droops  
    Its crimson from the trees,  
And there the cactus' queenly charms  
    Lure back the passing breeze.

Weep not, no more our woodlands  
    And our hedge-row elms to see;  
Forget them; our adopted land  
    Has many a statelier tree;  
The palm-like zamia there  
    Endiadem its cone  
With bending leaves, whose mateless grace  
    Our willow's self would own.

There the dark gum-tree's polished leaves  
    Fling back to heaven the sun;  
There, Titan pines upscale the sky,  
    Uptower'd to here by none;

The orange garlands there  
    Its form with odorous snow,  
And round the grass-tree's banded trunk,  
    Its sweeping tresses flow.

Ay, blithely sing my prison'd thrush,  
    Full soon shall you be free,  
For the bell-bird's note outsweetens yours  
    Beyond the swelling sea;  
And, scarlet-vested almsman,  
    Your latest dole I cast;  
For, robin, on your English face,  
    I look, perchance, my last.

Yet, scarlet one, so long I've loved  
    Your painted form to know,  
There's a dainty gift at parting —  
    Ay, more than crumbs I throw;

For a pleasant daylight dream  
Have you ever been to me,  
And my thanks and love I fling you  
Ere I pass the rolling sea.

## AUSTRALIA.

Oh, parch'd—parch'd are the long grey plains  
That stretch from round us here;  
In vain the sound of coming rains  
The dry air pines to hear;  
Along the river's bed  
The earth is crack'd and dry,  
Save where, in hot green pools,  
The fishes, gasping, die.

No rain—no rain—still hot white dust  
In blinding clouds sweeps by,  
And still the hot wind burns along  
Beneath the scorching sky.

Alas, where, fresh and green,  
    Arose our young year's wheat,  
But fields of wither'd stalks  
    Stand, blackening in the heat.

Our garden flowers — our English flowers —  
    So tended, that the thought  
Of happy hours afar we spent  
    Might often back be brought —  
The daisy 'twas my pride  
    To water day by day —  
The primrose — all have died,  
    Or wither fast away.

Oh, for green England's gurgling brooks!  
    The herdsman has to tell  
That far away the cows he drove  
    To try the chalk-pit well;

Their latest hope was there,  
But they found it parch'd and dry,  
With its hot depths glaring blinding white  
Against the burning sky.

No sound that tells of freshness —  
Of coming rain — alone  
The rattle of the fiery dust,  
Against the casement, blown,  
The dingo's howl for water —  
Our parch'd cows moaning there,  
And the locust's wither'd song, that seems  
To sear the very air.

Oh, weary, weary was the day  
That happiness we sold,  
And the pleasant light of England,  
For the hopes of sudden gold —

And weary is the weary thought,  
That never, but in dreams,  
We shall tread again her meadow-paths  
Or wander by her streams !

Oh, for the fresh, cool airs  
That, round the temples, blow,  
Of those, through England's orchards,  
Through England's woods, that go !  
Oh, would I were again  
Where never more I'll be,  
In the land I've left for ever—  
In my home beyond the sea !

## AUSTRALIA.

The robin lighted on the tree,  
And merrily he sang,  
Till, with his cheerful minstrelsy,  
The lonely clearing rang ;

'The song came clear and shrill  
Through the open window near,  
And hush'd grew all and still  
That strange sweet voice to hear.

Upon his broad and horny hand  
The settler leans his brow,  
And, far from his adopted land,  
His thoughts are wandering now; —  
With finger raised — fixed eye —  
Lips parted for a word,  
The wife sits listening by —  
What sings it of, sweet bird?

Oh, dwellers in the southern sea,  
'Twas thus the red-breast sung,  
Full well are known the cots to me,  
Green England's lanes among;



The homesteads, well I know,  
Whose blue smoke's curling still  
From all her thymy downs and vales,  
From ev'ry grassy hill.

Oh, pleasant is the green, green Spring,  
They heard the redbreast sing,  
In England's woods and verdant lanes  
How pleasant is the Spring!  
How, through the soft warm sunshine  
Of April's golden hours,  
Laugh up to heaven her villages,  
Ingarlanded with flowers!

There, noisy of its happiness,  
The brook is bubbling by,  
And there, in pastures green and deep,  
The happy cattle lie;

The daisy lights the meadow —  
The speedwell stars the lane,  
And the glory of the golden furze  
Burns on her heaths again.

Oh, for the pleasant primrose banks  
That bask beneath her skies !  
Oh, for the thousand silver streams  
Her summer never dries !  
Oh, but for one sweet hour,  
In happiness to roam  
Among your farms and villages,  
My own green island home !

No withering winds beneath her skies  
Her fields fair hopes destroy,  
For, gentle as the airs of May,  
Her breezes bring but joy ;

The wealth her Spring has told  
His treasures shall win,  
By Autumn's banded sickles  
With songs is garner'd in.

Then, dwellers in the southern sea,  
Away before the wind,  
And bless the swelling sails that leave  
This streamless land behind;  
Again, again, seek happiness,  
No more from it to roam,  
And bless the redbreast's simple song  
That taught the worth of home.

## ENGLAND.

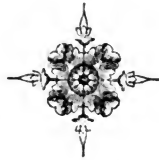
Oh, Mary, there's the robin;  
Quick — throw the window up,  
For, while I have a meal to share,  
With me he's free to sup;

There — there — let daintiest crumbs  
In part your guerdon be,  
For the song that lured us back again  
Across the surging sea.

Oh, fair is nature everywhere,  
In heaven — on land and sea;  
But loveliest in my own green land  
Is nature still to me.  
And still dear shall be the song,  
Still the singer shall be dear  
That taught me that the constant home  
Of happiness was here.

Oh, England — England, land of lands,  
Thank heaven ! I've wisdom earn'd —  
Through sorrow and heartsickness, well,  
Thy worth, green land, I've learn'd;

Now blessings track the song that taught  
    The girdling billows foam,  
Around no land that mates with thee,  
    My own green island home.



## THE WATCH OF THE CRUSADES.

SHE sits in the eastern turret  
Of that castle rugged and grey,  
And ever her watch is eastward kept,  
Till the long day dies away.

Till, behind her, dies the sunset,  
And darkness the far view fills,  
That she looks across, from its English walls  
To its circling English hills.

Yet they rise unseen before her,  
Those hills of her own green Kent,  
For ever a far-off landscape, here  
Is with her, since first he went;

Since, the cross on his knightly shoulder,  
And his vassals array'd — O woe !  
Lost — and, how long ! to be lost to her,  
Years since, she saw him go.

And ever the eastmost turret  
She climbs to, to look in vain  
To the turn in the road that must show him first,  
When he comes, if he comes again.

And there, from that eastward turret,  
Her looks will roam and roam  
Down the one grey road, from the broidery raised  
That is work'd to greet him home.

Her maids may whisper and chatter,  
But, jest and laugh as they may,  
She tries in vain to heed their mirth,  
All lost to what they say.

But most she loves to clamber  
Up — up the steep winding stair,  
To that grey still chamber, when no one,  
No voice, and no laugh are there.

Then — then, in that grey still turret,  
What sounds in her hush'd ears, ring !  
What scenes of sorrow, and ever one form,  
To her eyes, her heart's fears bring !

Look ! now, to her inward vision,  
A cloudless sky is given,  
A glaring earth, that fiercely glows  
To the glow of a glaring heaven.

Blind to all outward seeing,  
In thought, she only sees  
The stirless shade of the desert palms  
That know not of air or breeze.



And the stretch of the blinding desert  
    Glares redly across her sight,  
Still sands that know no motion,  
    Bathed in eternal light.

Then forms are seen, and horsemen  
    Upon the hot wastes rise,  
The ranks of the worn Crusaders,  
    They flicker before her eyes.

“ Water ! O Jesu ! water !  
    “ One drop ! ” she hears that yell,  
As if 'twere Dives, shrieking up  
    To Lazarus, out from hell.

And one gaunt shape she watches,  
    Wordless, amid the din,  
That onward toils through the molten sands,  
    To the mocking spring to win.

On the hot sand, who lies dying,  
Too weak to scare away  
The vulture from his charger's eyes,  
He soon the foul bird's prey?

Or, fetlock-deep, their chargers  
Are toiling and toiling sore,  
While ever some sink 'neath the weary load  
They never shall bear more.

A moment — the silence rings with shouts,  
And the Arabs' yell she hears;  
The Christians' shrieks, and the Paynims' cries,  
And the splinter and crash of spears.

Again, and the swarthy Moslem  
Are gone, and the host toil by;  
God! have they left him there alone,  
Wounded — unshrived to die?



O that her love could bear her,  
As swift as her wild fear flies,  
To pillow on hers his dying head,  
And to bless his dying eyes!

But sometimes the eastmost turret  
Gives her brain as weary dreams  
Of cities and kiosk'd gardens,  
And fountains and golden streams:

For, ever those gardens tending,  
A Christian slave is there,  
That the bitter scoff of the Paynim hounds  
Must, smitten and shackled, bear;

Till the knightly heart is broken,  
And the haughty eye grows dim,  
And the stately form is bow'd and bent,  
Till the meanest can scoff at him.

Or, hark ! his haughty spirit,  
Unbroken, Mahound has curst,  
And spat at the dogs who know not Christ,  
And hath dared them to their worst.

And, crouch'd in that ghastly dungeon,  
Where newt and adder crawl,  
She sees him, tortured, and crush'd, and worn  
By misery worse than all.

O terrors ! in shapes, how ghastly,  
You scare and affray her eyes !  
And hope, no fairer visions,  
No sweeter dreams, supplies ?

Yes; ever the first in glory,  
In danger, saved through all,  
Joy shows him, Christ's dear soldier,  
Not doom'd to sink or fall.

And ever the deadly melée,  
And burning wastes are trod,  
Secure, by him she loveth,  
Her warrior, loved of God.

And ever, as on he battles  
To where Christ's triumphs were,  
His thoughts, she knows, are of his Lord,  
His Lord alone, and her.

Then sometimes, calmly sinking  
In such sweet dreams, to rest,  
With a yet — yet dearer vision  
Her happier eyes are blest.

O joy of joys ecstatic !  
A glad cry strikes her dumb  
With gladness, calling to her,  
“Come down ! our lord has come !”

Then — then, the glorious angels  
That guard her, smile and know,  
Heaven's blessedness at times is shown  
To mortals, yet below.



## CASSANDRA SPEAKS !

With finger raised, with starting eye,  
With streaming hair, who wanders by ?  
With ashen lips, who shuddering shrieks ?

Cassandra speaks ! Cassandra speaks !

“ Woe ! roaring flames and gleaming arms !

“ Woe ! rushing feet and wail'd alarms ! ”

Still — still of woe, but woe, she shrieks ;

Cassandra speaks ! Cassandra speaks !

“ Nods not your Ilion to its fall ?

“ Nod not high tower and God-built wall ? ”

Of wreck, but wreck, that wild voice shrieks ;

Cassandra speaks ! Cassandra speaks !

“ Up! in your streets are hid the foe!  
“ Up! ere they smite and spare not! Woe!”  
That cry its frenzied warning shrieks;  
Cassandra speaks! Cassandra speaks!

“ Blood — steaming blood, on hearth and floor!  
“ Blood where your knees the Gods adore!”  
Of death that cry for ever shrieks;  
Cassandra speaks! Cassandra speaks!

“ Woe! woe! ye pamper’d and ye high!  
“ In vain ye wake — ye strive — ye fly!”  
For your deaf ears that warning shrieks;  
Cassandra speaks! Cassandra speaks!

“ Years did the Gods to ye ordain,  
“ That ye should purge ye pure from stain!  
“ Gone! gone! the hour with vengeance reeks!”  
Cassandra speaks! Cassandra speaks!



“ Woe ! gleaming arms in every street !

“ Woe ! vengeful arms, these wild eyes, meet !

“ Hot blood—your blood, upon them reeks !”

Cassandra speaks ! Cassandra speaks !

O doom'd ! and do ye only flock

About her steps, to scoff and mock ?

To hear but dreams in all she shrieks ?

Cassandra speaks ! Cassandra speaks !

O awful Gods ! ye close their ears !

O wrathful Gods ! they know not fears !

To deafen'd ears in vain she shrieks !

Cassandra speaks ! Cassandra speaks !



## UFTON COURT.

DIVE, dive, O swallow, dart and dive !

Your joy is changeless, but ours, how short !  
So whispers this long-lost home to me,  
My boyhood's dwelling of Ufton Court.

O weedy terrace—O silent walks—  
O echoing porch—O waters green—  
For forty years where the palm-tree waves,  
Not such have my dreams of Ufton been !

Not so I saw you in that old time,  
When love, it struggled, but pride, it won,  
When, choked with passion, I left you last,  
For the march and camp 'neath an Indian sun.

Not so I saw you, when on our line  
 The Pindarees' wild horse came down;  
 Not so 'mid the yell of the roaring breach,  
 When we storm'd red Bhurtpore's cloven town.

No—all unchanged, in those eastern dreams,  
 Your fountain leap'd, and your broad elms swung,  
 And with one soft laugh—that ever I heard—  
 With gladness and music your chambers rung.

The oak is green, and the linnet sings  
 As sweet a song as ever it sung;  
 But where is the voice that warbled here  
 A sweeter music, when I was young?

Soft falls the sunlight as then it fell,  
 On gable, and casement, and garden wall;  
 But where is she, to my boyish heart  
 That made the gladness of Ufton Hall?

“ Or you or I should go,” they said,

“ Or you be homeless, or I depart.”

Strange lands they thrust between our love,

But never they thrust us heart from heart !

A differing faith our fathers held ;

A differing faith we from them drew ;

My curse be on the ancient jars

That help'd to part me, love, from you.

My curse be on the bigot hate

That bann'd thy rites, O ancient Hall ;

And hunted forth thy outlaw'd priests

From passaged roof and hollow'd wall.

“ A boyish passion, a girlish love —

“ Let other faces our fancies fill.”

Little they thought would my hair be white,

And her smile in my heart be lonely still.

For forty springs have your thorn-trees bloom'd,  
For forty autumns your oaks been gold;  
Yet the sight of your rising chimneys shook  
My blood, as it thrill'd its throbs of old.

Yet ah! how little, as children here,  
When these same garden-walks we paced,  
We thought that the love we then scarce knew,  
They fain would have from our hearts effaced.

Effaced! Our names on the beech then cut,  
The beech with years may at last resign;  
But never a change my love could know,  
And never a change could come to thine.

Ah, well I mind me of that sweet hour,  
When conscious love to your eyes first came;  
No, never I knew their depths to leave,  
Or shown or hidden — till death the same.

O hazel eyes, 'mid your soft brown curls !  
Fain, fain had hidden them, land and sea ;  
But ever they lived before my thought,  
And ever they look'd their love to me.

For ever they gazed with that parting look  
That sware a love that must endure ;  
'The love of the heiress of Ufton Court  
For me, her cousin, scorn'd and poor. .

Yet never a breath of that sweet love  
Or word or letter to me might bear ;  
Too keen was that mother's cold, proud watch—  
But, utter'd or not, that love was there.

Ay, long they pray'd her to wed the Earl,  
And long they scoff'd at her idle gloom ;  
But changeless stole she away from youth,  
Stole she unto her early tomb.

And therefore, well, to my aged thoughts,  
It seems that, heirless, to stranger hands,  
From those who wither'd our joy to grief,  
Should pass, old Court, thy hall and lands.

And now, at length, that I look once more,  
Old home, on thee — decay thy fate —  
On thee, I say, let the curse work on,  
Of the hearts thy pride made desolate.



## THE STAR OF THE BALLET.

A SKETCH FROM THE SOUTH.

For hours, what crowds have throng'd its doors !

From pit to gallery, what a sight !

St. Carlo holds its hundreds more

Than e'er it held before to-night;

From Scotland is she? Well, the South

At length is by the North outdone !

Her name's alone in every mouth;

They're here to see but one — but one —

But one — but one.

They say all London's at her feet;

Gay Paris worships only her;

Her steps' wild charm to fever heat

Even Moscow's sluggish soul could stir;



From West to East, all Europe through,  
One round of triumph has she run;  
Now here we crown this wonder too,  
And Naples flocks to see but one,  
But one — but one.

Alike from palace, quay, and street,  
Her worshippers to-night are brought,  
As if this dancer's glancing feet  
Were sunny Naples' only thought;  
Who is not burning to adore?  
Unseen, her triumph's yet begun;  
She comes; her fame has flown before,  
And all are here to see but one,  
But one — but one.

Look round before the curtain's raised;  
How well that beauty acts it there,  
In front, to have her white arm praised,  
And flash the diamonds in her hair!

But that one face, what does it here ?

Its sternness, well, each eye may shun !

Her countryman ? Ah, then 'tis clear,

He too is here to see but one,

But one — but one.

Our Norma 's good ; yet much I fear

To-night no thunders wait for her ;

And scarce, I think, were Grisi here,

Or Lind herself, a hand would stir ;

Their favourite air — 'tis all in vain ;

They would the ballet were begun ;

Of her alone a sight they 'd gain ;

To-night they 've only eyes for one,

For one — for one.

She comes ! she comes ! that wreath of girls,

How fair they float adown the stage !

Now, swift the rosy circle whirls ;

Now, breaks, one form to disengage ;

'Tis she whom all are hush'd to see;  
What thunders, still and still begun,  
But hush'd to burst, proclaim, 'tis she!  
A thousand eyes are strain'd on one,  
On one — but one.

How wondrous fair! and yet, how cold  
The perfect oval of her face,  
Where all of beauty we behold,  
And yet of triumph, scarce a trace!  
She bends; now, all unmoved, she stands,  
As if her right she only won,  
Her due, the rapture from our hands  
That, well she knows, would greet but one,  
But one — but one.

Away — away — her quivering feet  
The raptured eye can scarcely trace,  
Where all the forms of beauty meet,  
And every motion's rarest grace;

She bounds; she whirls; with floating arms,  
She poises; each by each outdone;  
Now proudly pants in all her charms  
Amid the plaudits hail'd on one,  
On one — but one.

Rain down your wreaths—your rarest flowers!  
Heap'd to her feet, let blossoms fall!  
Her queenly gaze is raised to ours;  
Her lighted eyes are thanking all;  
What brought that flush to breast and brow,  
That flush that ne'er the dance had done?  
That start? She saw each face but now;  
Now, now, she sees—she sees but one,  
But one — but one.

What does he here? why has he sped  
O'er sea — o'er Alps, to front the gaze  
Of her, to him but as the dead,  
So loved — so lost in early days?

Can she, this bared thing of the stage,  
From God and her youth's worship won,  
This wept-for sin—can she engage  
One thought of his—one thought, but one,  
Even one — but one ?

Are her old father's thoughts less stern ?  
Perchance his aged eyes grow dim  
In watch for her ; his heart may yearn  
At last for her who yearns for him ;  
O baseless hope ! he has not sent ;  
His daughter ? Daughter he has none ;  
He knows not her, from God who went ;  
He has no child — no child — not one,  
Not one — not one.

His home's old Bible holds her name,  
Yet, nightly, when 'tis open'd there,  
For her who brought his grey hairs shame,  
For her, so loved ! he has no prayer ;

P

Prop of his age ! how could she turn  
From God, the world's vain ways to run !  
O bait of hell ! its fame to earn  
With his old curse, but heap'd on one,  
On one — but one !

His curse ! his curse ! O would his heart  
Could feel, what unto Heaven is known,  
No touch of vice need spot the art  
His stern faith holds as sin alone !  
Ah, could he know, who brought that start,  
What paths of peril she has run,  
Unstain'd in thought—in act—in heart,  
Would still his sternness spurn the one,  
The loved—the one ?

'Tis he, her lover of the days  
Ere yet she scorn'd her girlish home,  
Ere yet she nursed a thought of praise,  
Ere yet she knew a wish to roam ;

And here, enchantress of the hour,  
Her memory's thought has backward run  
To the clear burn—the thorn in flower,  
The gloaming meetings, shared with one,  
With one — but one.

Fame whisper'd, and she weakly thought  
She well could thrust her pride above  
Her stifled heart, nor e'er be taught,  
No pride, for long, can conquer love;  
Through joy—through triumph, soon that heart  
Its deeper tones would ever run,  
Till from all other love she 'd start,  
Through all her temptings, true to one,  
To one—but one.

O doubt it not! there have been hours  
When raptures pall'd, and praise was pain;  
When, crown'd with pleasure's rosiest flowers,  
She yearn'd for that still vale again;

Half loathed the city's feverish life,  
Half wish'd the hopes of years undone,  
To flee the fame—the thirst—the strife,  
For some poor home, with him, the one,  
The loved — the one.

Ah! still that home she yet may win,  
Woo—win it through the world's applause;  
To-night, will he not drink it in,  
And, ere he dare to spurn her, pause?  
She starts; away in air she springs,  
Her every former grace outdone,  
Till, round one storm of plaudits rings,  
She heeds it not; she heeds but one,  
But one — but one.

He rose; he's gone; even while, with him,  
To leave that life of life she yearn'd;  
He only saw, before him, swim  
A scorn, his latest hope that spurn'd,

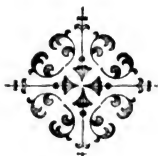


A fallen shape, that, in his sight,  
Dared vaunt the heights its shame had won;  
Of whom, to win to God and light,  
Remain'd no hope — no hope — not one,  
Not one — not one.

He's gone; all vainly may she look,  
Through years, shall look for him in vain,  
Whose love, she once, for fame forsook,  
And now, would give that fame to gain;  
That fame, that scarce a pulse can stir,  
To gaze on her, though thousands run,  
Those gazing thousands — what to her  
Are they ! still — still she looks for one,  
For one — but one.

He's gone; amid her native hills  
He dwells, no more to name her name,  
A thought of whom, with sternness fills  
His heart, grown bitter with her shame;

He little thinks, that worshipp'd star,  
While crowds around her chariot run,  
In thought, how oft ! is wandering far  
To that loved home—to him—the one,  
The loved—the one.



## ON A DEAD INFANT.

DEAD ! Dead !—what peace abides within the word —  
For thee, O little one, what bliss of rest !  
By her who bore thee, with what anguish heard,  
    God knows !—God knoweth best ;  
God willeth best ; yet, while the words we say,  
We know thy grief, wild mother, must have way.

O never shall those tiny fingers press  
Her cheek ?—oh, never to the full breasts steal,  
That yearn their tender touch, that so would bless !  
    Their blessed touch to feel !  
O never shall those closed lids, opening, rise  
To look delight into her hungering eyes !

Yearned for—how yearned for wast thou, little one!  
Each month more dear that seem'd to bring thee near,  
Alas! that seem'd, but seem'd; God's will be done!

We may not know thee here;  
We may not know thee, but as, babe, thou art,  
Cold, even to thy mother's quivering heart.

Not know thee!—mother, with thy sorrow wild,  
How is that still face stamp'd within thy heart!  
That face, so look'd on! when "Give me my child!"

Thou cried'st, nor dared we part  
In that first moment, from thy arms' embrace  
The cold white stillness of that blind, fix'd face.

God comfort her! all human words are vain  
To bid her shun to die or care to live;  
Who shall bid peace to be for her again?

Who, save God, comfort give?  
Who fill the empty heart that finds a void  
In all it fear'd, or hoped for, or enjoy'd?

God comfort her!—who else?—not even he  
Who for thee, sweet one, bore a father's love;  
Who, with what pride and joy! she look'd to see  
    Bend this new life above,  
And show her in his eyes the unshadow'd bliss  
That look'd from hers; alas! now changed to this!

Leave her to God, and to the tender years  
That soften misery into gentle grief,  
Grief, that may almost find at last from tears,  
    'Sad tears, may find relief;  
Grief, that from time may gather perfect trust  
In all heaven wills, and own even this is just.

For thee, dead snowdrop, all our tears are dried;  
We know thee evermore as to us given  
Within our hearts for ever to abide,  
    Type of all meet for heaven;  
Type of all purity of which we guess,  
That heaven shall make more pure, and earth not less.

Wake not ! the cruel, tender hand of death,  
Death, with a tenderness for earth too deep,  
Ere thou hadst drawn one mortal troubled breath,  
    Hush'd thee to quiet sleep;  
Still'd, ere it woke, the anguish of thy cries,  
Nor gave the tears of earth to dim thine eyes.

Why would we wake thee ? Joy and grief, we know,  
Walk hand in hand along earth's crowded ways ;  
Who 'scape the thorns that in our paths below  
    For all life thickly lays ?  
Why should we wish thee on a weary way,  
Where thou might'st long for night while yet 'twas day ?

For we, most blest, even when to heaven we turn  
Eyes bright with thanks for all that makes life dear,  
Even then our trembling hearts have not to learn  
    Of sorrows that are here —  
Of griefs that dimm'd our dearest hours with tears —  
Of bitter memories that seem shadowing fears.

Hope has no part in thee, in surety lost,  
Sweet bud of being, but to bloom above;  
Nor may our thoughts of thee with fear be cross'd,  
    Thou homed in God's dear love,  
Borne by thy heavenly Father's hand from all  
That makes the purest stoop, the strongest fall.

Lily, thou shalt not know the soiling gust  
Of earthly passion bow thee to its will;  
Temptation and all ill are from thee thrust,  
    Nor tears thine eyes shall fill;  
Remorse and penitence thou shalt not need,  
From sin's pollution and earth's errors freed.

O bless'd, to 'scape the mystery of life,  
Its wavering walk 'twixt holiness and sin!  
Allow'd, without earth's struggles — our weak strife,  
    Heaven's palms to win,  
Through the bright portals, thou at once hast prest,  
To endless blessedness and lasting rest.

## SHE'S DEAD.

THE Sycamore shall hear its bees again —

The willow droop its green adown the sun;  
But thou, O heart, shalt yearn for Spring in vain —  
Thy Mays are done !

Even from the graveyard elms, the rook shall caw  
Of love; of love, the dove shall make its moan;  
New Springs shall see the bliss my glad Springs saw —  
I, grief alone.

O heart ! to whose sweet pulses danced the year,  
The dirge above thy gladness hath been sung;  
The faded hours, upon thy youth's sad bier,  
Have grave-flowers flung !



She died — and with her died, O life, for thee,  
The flush of love, and all hope's cloudless dreams !  
Sunless — of mirth, henceforth, thou, heart, must see  
But moonlight gleams.

O shrouded sweetness ! Lo ! those lips are white ;  
The roses of the year no more are red !  
What is the silver lily to our sight ?  
Thou — thou art fled !

O life ! O sadness ! thou the deepening gloom  
Of dying Autumn for thy skies would'st crave —  
Would'st see all beauty, withering to the tomb,  
Fade o'er her grave !

TO BERANGER.

ON THE FALL OF SEBASTOPOL.

SING, Beranger ! — another song !  
And for awhile forget  
The memories of thy joyous youth,  
And even thy Lisette;  
Again the conquering tricolor  
To Europe's winds is flung;  
Again Marengo's eagles soar,  
And need their fierce flight sung.  
Then, Beranger, another song;  
For who can sing so well  
The mighty deeds that glory needs  
Thy matchless songs to tell ?

Hark ! Paris hears the selfsame shout

So oft she heard of old ;

Hark ! victory tells again the tale

So oft by thee she told,

The tale that tells how triumph still

On France's eagles sits,

And mates Sebastopol's dread fame

With that of Austerlitz.

Then, Beranger, another song ;

For who can sing so well

The mighty deeds that glory needs

Thy matchless songs to tell ?

Too long the northern despot's heel

Has trampled Europe down ;

Too long has freedom, trembling, seem'd

To quail before his frown ;

At last the West dares use its strength ;

At last its hosts go forth ;

Let Europe's despots hear how well

We smote their vaunted North.

Then, Beranger, another song ;  
For who can sing so well  
The mighty deeds that glory needs  
Thy matchless songs to tell ?

For forty years has Europe slept  
A base inglorious sleep ;  
And, if for Poland's fate she wept,  
She only dared to weep.  
If Hungary fell, we did but moan —  
But hope for both remains ;  
We hunt the Tartar back ; at last  
We help to loose their chains.  
Then, Beranger, another song ;  
For who can sing so well  
The mighty deeds that glory needs  
Thy matchless songs to tell ?

The Austrian fawns upon the Czar ;  
Ask if an Ulm he needs ;  
Tell Prussia's dotard, his false faith  
Another Jena breeds ;

Bid all the hundred pigmy things  
That wear a German crown,  
Beware at once, or, with the Czar,  
Their tiny thrones go down.  
Then, Beranger, another song;  
For who can sing so well  
The mighty deeds that glory needs  
Thy matchless songs to tell ?

Twice did the barbarous Cossacks' steeds  
Bathe in the trampled Seine;  
Leagued Europe help'd them on the way,  
They'll never come again.  
Those days are past; with Europe leagued,  
Napoleon's eagles wave:  
The Europe that of old they tore,  
To-day they fly to save.  
Then, Beranger, another song;  
For who can sing so well  
The mighty deeds that glory needs  
Thy matchless songs to tell ?

Sing! Eylau's strife and Wagram's fame  
    You gave to every tongue;  
Let newer glories, great as theirs,  
    To-day by you be sung;  
Let Inkermann's and Alma's deeds  
    In songs immortal live!  
And dread Sebastopol's fierce fame  
    To deathless glory give!  
Then, Beranger, another song;  
    For who can sing so well  
The mighty deeds that glory needs  
    Thy matchless songs to tell?



TO A LADY I KNOW, AGED ONE.

O SUNNY curls ! O eyes of blue !  
The hardest natures known,  
Baby, would softly speak to you  
With strangely tender tone ;  
What marvel, Mary, if from such  
Your sweetness, love, would call ?  
We love you, baby, O how much,  
Most dear of all things small !

Unborn, how, more than all on earth,  
Your mother yearn'd to meet  
Your dream'd-of face ; you, from your birth,  
Most sweet of all things sweet !

Even now for your small hands' first press  
Of her full happy breast,  
How oft does she God's goodness bless,  
And feel her heart too blest!

You came, a wonder to her eyes,  
That doated on each grace,  
Each charm that still with new surprise  
She show'd us in your face:  
Small beauties? ah, to her not small,  
How plain to her blest mind!  
Though, baby dear, I doubt if all,  
All that she found, could find.

A year has gone, and, mother, say,  
Through all that year's blest round,  
In her, has one sweet week or day  
Not some new beauty found?



What moment has not fancied one,  
Since first your eyes she met?  
And, wife, I know you have not done  
With finding fresh ones yet.

Nor I; for, baby, some new charm  
Each coming hour supplies,  
So sweet, we think change can but harm  
Your sweetness in our eyes,  
Till comes a newer, and we know,  
As that fresh charm we see,  
In you, sweet nature wills to show  
How fair a babe can be.

Kind God, that gave this precious gift,  
More clung to every day,  
To Thee our eyes we trembling lift,—  
Take not Thy gift away!

Looking on her, we start in dread;  
We stay our shuddering breath,  
And shrink to feel the terror said  
In that one dark word — death.

O tender eyes ! O beauty strange !  
When childhood shall depart,  
O that thou, babe, through every change,  
May'st keep that infant heart !  
O gracious God ! O this make sure,  
That, of no grace beguiled,  
The woman be in soul as pure  
As now she is a child !



TO W. G. B.

Soul, not yet from heaven beguiled,  
Soul, not yet by earth defiled,  
Dwelling in this little child,  
    Be, O to him be  
    All we would have thee !

Through this life of joy and care,  
If that grief must be his share,  
Make, O make him strong to bear  
    All God willeth, all  
    That to him must fall !

O when passions stir his heart,  
Tempting him from good to part,  
Make him from the evil start,  
That he walk aright,  
Soil-less in God's sight!

Taint him not with mortal sin,  
That heaven's palms his hands may win,  
That heaven's gate he enter in;  
Of God's favour sure,  
Pure as he is pure!

If he wander from the right,  
O through error's darksome night,  
On to heaven's eternal light,  
Guide, O guide his way,  
'To heaven's perfect day!







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